

Hafa Adai!

'The people should not suffer in dispute between CPA, Star Marianas' **PAGE 2**
JGO will hear testimony of Torres, Deleon Guerrero on Friday. **PAGE 5**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 8, 2021

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In-person classes at PSS now set for Jan. 3, 2022

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

All Public School System schools in the CNMI will resume in-person classes on Jan. 3, 2022.

Also, at the discretion of the PSS Education commissioner, PSS schools on Tinian and Rota may reopen for in-person classes as soon as next Monday, Dec. 13, 2021.

The CNMI Board of Education came to these decisions unanimously during an emergency board meeting yesterday, Dec. 13, 2021.

» **Tinian and Rota schools could return to in-person classes as soon as next Monday**



day which only had one item on its agenda under "New See **CLASSES** on **Page 4**

78 new positive cases

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. reported yesterday that 78 positive cases of CO-

The CNMI Board of Education holds a virtual emergency virtual board meeting yesterday. In this screengrab from a Facebook stream of the meeting, with webcams on are Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada, BOE chair Andrew L. Orsini, non-voting BOE member and teacher representative Phylis M. Ain, J.D., and BOE secretary/ treasurer Maisie B. Tenorio.

JOSHUA SANTOS

VID-19 were confirmed on Dec. 3, bringing the CNMI's total to 1,182 cases.

Of these cases, 43 were individuals who were already in isolation at a designated government site, CHCC reported. CHCC's official announcements can be found on its social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

See 78 on **Page 4**

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:55pm, Dec. 7, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **89.3%**
Fully Vaccinated: **89.3%**

Days since last community transmission **1**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	34,989
Fully Vaccinated:	31,993
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,121
Fully Vaccinated:	4,794
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,060

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,270	13	19,283
Recovered	18,702	39	18,741
Active	262	13	275
Deaths	266	1	267

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	1,104	78	1,182
Traced via Travel Screening	267	0	267
Traced via Community Screening	837	78	915
Deaths	5	0	5

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

ON THE NET

<https://fb.watch/9Kr4CjWJrT/>

Torres: I never used DPS boats for fishing or recreation

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres accused the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee yesterday of misinforming

the community, saying he and his family never used Boating Safety vessels for fishing or recreational purposes, and

See **TORRES** on **Page 4**

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

17 DAYS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

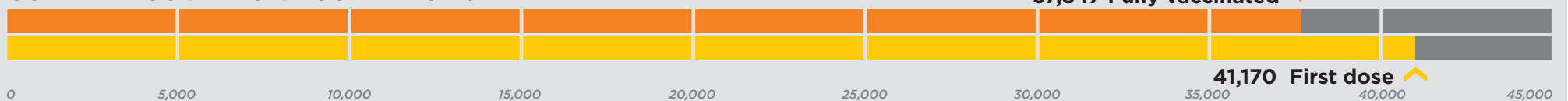


CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

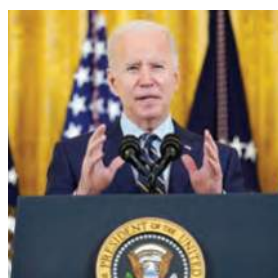
The Christmas Village at the Pedro C. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center is lit up and filled with Christmas-themed displays. Like the Capital Hill Christmas Village at the Office of the Governor parking lot, the village will be lit up and available for the community to see until Jan. 2 next year.

JOSHUA SANTOS

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



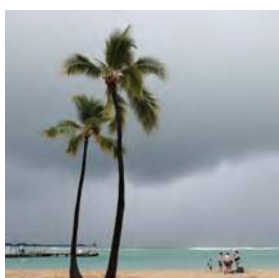
INSIDE



BUSINESS

President Joe Biden says his social agenda legislation would mean savings on prescription drugs.

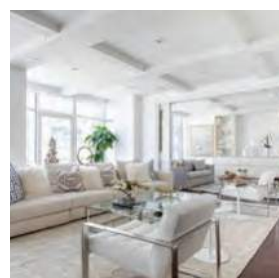
PAGE 11



NATION

A storm packing high winds and heavy rain flooded roads and knocked out power across Hawaii.

PAGE 12



GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

How do you incorporate white into your home? Can you mix different shades of white in one space?

PAGE 14



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Local

‘The people should not suffer in dispute between CPA, Star Marianas’

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has appealed to Star Marianas Airlines Inc., again, in an attempt to temporarily resolve the current dispute and resume interisland air service, stating that the true victims of the dispute are the residents of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

In a letter from CPA chair Kimberly King-Hinds to Star Marianas, she urged Star Marianas to accept the CNMI

government’s previous offer to subsidize the airline’s fee, for now, as a temporary measure so that interisland flights can resume.

“We must find a way to at the very least temporarily resolve the issues regarding the [fiscal year] 2022 rates so that interisland air service may resume. SMA’s decision to halt its operations has a substantial negative impact on our local traveling public. In an effort to lessen the impact of the dispute on the

traveling public, the CNMI governor committed to fully subsidize all fees and charges assessed to SMA from CPA for the remainder of [fiscal year] 2022, provided that SMA agrees to reduce the cost of travel to the islands of Tinian and Rota,” she said.

King-Hinds said Star Marianas’ resistance in accepting the offer is causing residents of Tinian and Rota to suffer.

“Instead of accepting a solution that would not burden CNMI residents who depend

on interisland travel, SMA is resistant to give up its leverage on the basis that it is about the principle of the matter. SMA states that it does not want to saddle CNMI taxpayers by accepting the subsidy offered by the governor. Instead, SMA has decided to saddle CNMI taxpayers by ceasing operations. This inflicts a much larger burden on the CNMI—particularly those residents [on] Tinian and Rota. The people should not suffer because of a dis-

pute between CPA and SMA, especially during these trying times in the CNMI when everyone should be working together,” she said.

The CPA chair claims that CPA is willing and ready to engage in meaningful mediation to resolve the dispute and to find a pathway of compromise for the benefit of everyone involved.

“SMA responded that the issue is not entirely about money, and money is not a solution to the overall prob-



King-Hinds

lem. CPA agrees. The subsidy was never a solution to the overall problem, it was a temporary compromise with the end goal of amicably resolving the dispute through a series of consultations with SMA in the immediate future. It is a temporary solution to offer relief to the traveling public who will suffer the most as a result of SMA’s decision to stop operations,” King-Hinds said.

In response to Star Marianas’ doubts about the sincerity of CPA’s offer to conduct negotiations to resolve the dispute, CPA claims they have always been open to mediation.

“Setting aside the history of the dispute, CPA is open to mediation. This dispute between SMA and CPA has been protracted and litigious for the past nine years. At play here is one commuter airline and one port authority,” the CPA chair said.

According to a previous article on *Saipan Tribune*, King-Hinds assured the airline that, with the goal of immediately resuming inte-island air connectivity, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has given his commitment to fully subsidize all fees and charges CPA will assess SMA for the remainder of the fiscal year.

However, Star Marianas president Shaun Christian said subsidizing fees is not the solution because the air-

See **THE PEOPLE** on next page

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Let's Go Places

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**EDWARD
FRANK CABRERA**
Petitioner,

vs.
HUANG XIAOMEI
Respondent.

FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION
NO. 21-0439

SUMMONS FOR
PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 8012 SVRB Saipan CNMI 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 20th day of October, 2021.

/s/
CLERK OF COURT



NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 234-5498 Ext. 6824 • email: ppmo@marinas.edu

LAPTOP COMPUTER AND ACCESSORIES

INVITATION FOR BIDS NMC IFB 22-0002

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement and delivery of Information Technology Equipment for NMC CREES offices on Saipan, Rota and Tinian.

The bid specifications and Scope of Work packet may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

Electronic packet, Anita Camacho email:
anita.camacho@marinas.edu

Bid submission
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P, As Terlaje Campus Saipan
Due Date and Time: 10:00am, December 13, 2021, ChST

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through USDA-NIFA authorized under the Hatch Act, as amended August 11, 1955, Award No. NI20HFPXXXXXG059-002 (Regular)/Smith Lever Act section 3b & 3c, Award No. NI17SLBCXXXXG020-004.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

'PSS will not discriminate regardless of vaccination status'

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In the Public School System's efforts to keep students safe from COVID-19, CNMI Board of Education chair Andrew L. Orsini said that PSS will continue with safety measures already in place and that PSS will not discriminate against any student regardless of their vaccination status.

When asked what measures are in place or in the works to protect PSS' unvaccinated students when in-person classes resume, Orsini cited a part of the CNMI Constitution that

requires PSS to offer education to all children. As such, PSS will continue on with its current safety measures and "will not discriminate against any student, be they vaccinated or vaccinated."

PSS' COVID-19 safety measures include sanitizing all surfaces, wearing face coverings, wearing gloves when necessary, maintaining social distancing, and checking temperatures.

"The PSS will not discriminate against any student, be they vaccinated or vaccinated,"



Orsini

ed. The Constitution of the NMI states that we have to offer education to all children and that education is mandatory. We will continue practicing the safety measures for all our students,"

said Orsini.

In an email Monday, Orsini also had a message to parents and guardians of unvaccinated children. "Our only message to parents of unvaccinated children is to inform their child to be aware of the

safety measures that are already in place for their child's safety," he said.

Briefly addressing the three cases of COVID-19 found on Oct. 28 through a collaboration among PSS, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, Orsini made clear that "schools did not bring or spread the virus into our community." Rather, through PSS' school-based testing sites "we were able to know the virus was already here," he said.

Public warned of high surf, rip currents

A high surf advisory is now in effect until 6pm Wednesday. A high rip current risk remains in effect through late Friday night.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, large breaking waves of up to 12 feet will be present in the surf zone and dangerous rip currents in north and east facing reefs of the Marianas.

This will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions

and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions.

The public is urged to stay out of the water along north and east facing shores. Elsewhere, swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, swim in a direction following the shoreline until you are out of the current, then head in to shore. (PR)

THE PEOPLE

From Page 2

line is capable of managing its own business affairs. "If CPA is willing to engage in

meaningful, structured discussions, then SMA is also willing to engage in such discussions and work toward restoring interisland air service," he had said.

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Learn deep bottom fishing with Peskan Taddong Project

500 Sails is happy to announce the implementation of its *Peskan Taddong* (Deep Bottom Fishing) project in partnership with Lino S. Tenorio & Associates.

500 Sails is the recipient of a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under its Recreational and Non-Commercial Fishing Program that aims to promote sustainable fishing opportunities and cultural fishing traditions.

Through NOAA, the *Peskan Taddong* project will teach novice fishermen the techniques of deep bottom fishing to encourage sustainable food

security for the CNMI. Each cohort of 12 students will be taught by long-time fisherman Lino S. Tenorio and his associates, Marcy Tenorio and Anthony Guerrero.

Each cohort will participate in a six-hour *land* (8:30am-2:30pm) and two-hour *ocean* (TBD) workshop that will take place over the course of the full day and may take up to two days, weather permitting. The scheduled dates for the *Peskan Taddong* project as best determined by the lunar calendar, holidays, and community social events are indicated below:

- Cohort 1: Monday, Dec. 13
- Cohort 2: Saturday, Jan. 15
- Cohort 3: Saturday, March 19
- Cohort 4: Monday, April 18
- Cohort 5: Friday, June 17

To register for the *Peskan Taddong* project, visit the link: <https://tinyurl.com/peskantaddong>

Tenorio is a well-established presence here in the CNMI and he's a trusted fishing instructor who believes in sharing the art and knowledge of deep bottom fishing to new generations. We're excited to be partnering with him on this," said Pete and Emma Perez, co-founders

of 500 Sails.

Tenorio has been a fishing instructor for the last 20 years but holds 35 years of fishing experience, which includes spearfishing, trolling, and shallow and deep bottom fishing.

Prior to his retirement, Tenorio served the CNMI government in various capacities as the former deputy commissioner for the Department of Public Safety and as the former commissioner for the first Adult Correctional Facility with the Department of Corrections.

Taking up fishing full time after his retirement, his wife and long-time fishing partner, Marcy Tenorio, joined as his assistant instructor in the last 10 years and is well versed in fishing techniques. His associate, Guerrero, is a part-time fisherman who also holds at least 10 years of fishing experience in trolling and deep bottom fishing.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Torres' statement on CNMI Constitution Day

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres on Tuesday issued the following statement:

"This Dec. 8, we celebrate Constitution Day and the continued progress we have made as a Commonwealth in political union with the United States.

"In addition, we also celebrate

our islands' annual Catholic tradition of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

"Over four decades ago, 39 leaders convened to develop the foundation of our government, beginning with words of our preamble, 'We the People of the Northern Mariana Islands.' In the pres-

ent day, the Commonwealth Constitution remains the 'embodiment of our traditions and hopes,' especially as we continue to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, work to upgrade our infrastructure, increase educational opportunities for our students, and revitalize our economy.

"I wish everyone in the CNMI a happy and safe Constitution Day." (PR)

ARC offers free CPR training

The American Red Cross-NMI Chapter is launching a Hands Only CPR initiative. The goal is to train 1,000 individuals over the next six months in life saving CPR.

The training is free and takes just 60 minutes to learn. Red Cross certified presenters will schedule free trainings with priority given to community groups.

"It's easy to learn and increases the chances of someone surviving a cardiac emergency. Most often a trained family member or bystander who knows these basic skills can make a big difference when someone stops breathing" said Mable Glenn, NMI board chair.

The chapter recently kicked off this important safety program with NMI Judiciary. During their profes-



sional development workshop, over 80 individuals were trained to use these life-saving skills.

To learn more about this program or register your group for training, call the NMI Chapter at 234-3459

for more information.

More than 350,000 cardiac arrests occur outside a hospital each year. Learn how to deliver lifesaving CPR care without rescue breaths and be prepared. (PR)

TORRES

From Page 1

that YouTube star Robert Arrington of Deer Meat for Dinner channel was never compensated with CNMI money for promoting the Northern Islands and the Commonwealth.

Torres talked about his trips to the Northern Islands with Arrington and his family and friends in 2020 in an interview with KKMP radio's Gary Sword. The video of the interview was forwarded to the media yesterday and posted in the governor's Facebook account.

This is the second in a series where Torres said he will provide "factual and historical information" in order to set the record straight. The first video released two weeks ago addressed the JGO's allegations regarding power and water billings associated with his private house in As Teo.

Torres said his understanding and belief is that Arrington actually spent over \$100,000 of his own money, paying for his own crew, his staff, and buying the roundtrip ticket for his family. "Imagine that, having someone who truly cares for the islands, truly cares for our culture, [and] wants to come here and pro-

mote [the] CNMI," he said.

The governor said the CNMI never paid a penny to Deer Meat for Dinner and Arrington, who was here just to promote the Marianas.

"We had over 21 million viewers. Imagine that for a program or a project that can easily cost way over \$500,000," he said.

Torres said Arrington brought his family, he loves the islands, he loves the CNMI's local culture, and that he should be praised for everything he has done. He pointed out that Arrington left Florida, flew here with his crew, with his family and rode 200 miles north to showcase the beauty of our islands to the rest of the world—the last frontier. "That is something that we all should be proud of," the governor said.

Torres said the JGO misinformed the community about Arrington's trip.

"We are all trying to promote the CNMI," he added.

As to the question about the Northern Islands trips during the pandemic in 2000, Torres said he has always been an advocate of diversifying the economy and tourism. He said the Northern Islands have always been a priority for his administration as well.

"I want to create new jobs, show-

case the Northern Islands, but at the same time also give hope and resettle our people that they continue to call the Northern Islands home," he said.

Torres said he remembers growing up when his father told him and his siblings that if there's anywhere in the world where he wants them to go together as brothers, it would be to the Northern Islands. The governor said he and his siblings did those trips to the Northern Islands in 2003 and 2004.

"I kind of still remember the feeling and the sentiment when I first went to the island of Pagan, how beautiful it was, and it still is pristine. Just immaculate all around. And it's a feeling that you cannot explain," he said.

Since then, Torres said, he continues to protect the Northern Islands, while giving the rest of the world the opportunity to experience the last frontier. "I'm not a governor of just Saipan, or Tinian and Rota. I'm also the governor of the whole entire chain, the Northern Islands, which include Alamagan, Pagan and Agrigan," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

CLASSES

From Page 1

Business": "Remote Learning." BOE member Antonio L. Borja made the motion for these decisions and it was seconded by BOE vice chair Herman M. Atalig.

The PSS leadership recently decided that PSS schools were to transition to and continue instruction online through the learning platform Blackboard Ultra from Dec. 6 to Dec. 23 in line with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' Dec. 5 directive that ordered the closure of non-essential government offices and put in place temporary restrictions for COVID-19 safety reasons effective Dec. 6 to Dec. 19.

During yesterday's meeting, legal counsel Tiberius Mocanu, who spoke on the behalf of the BOE during the meeting, agreed with legal counsel Michael Ernest, who represented the acting Education commissioner during the meeting. Mocanu said that PSS leadership's recent decision to transition to online learning in line with Torres' Dec. 5 directive was within their ability.

"PSS was within its rights to act, as it has the ability to act on a day-to-day basis, and they made a decision based on the information that they received on Sunday evening. Even

though the board had the directive that schools should be open, they are well within their rights [to take in] new information and act in the best interest of PSS," said Mocanu.

During the board meeting, acting Education commissioner Dr. Riza-lina M. Liwag spoke briefly on the impacts the recent turn of events has had on PSS and its capacity, and also cited recent student attendance numbers.

"This is a great time for us to really reflect...and our team management and our school leadership will come together so that we can really address these issues, concerns, and challenges. ...From there, we can propose to the board what is the best approach so that we could accommodate students. ...I hate to see students who are not learning, and we need to find ways as educators to assist them," she said.

The board last met on Nov. 12 to discuss the resumption of in-person classes for all PSS schools, which was initially set for Nov. 15. The board on Nov. 12 voted unanimously to move the reopening date to Nov. 29.

PSS then announced on Nov. 28 that it opted to go with a staggered return to in-person classes based on schools' COVID-19 screening/testing schedule. Yesterday's decision now supersedes this.

78

From Page 1

Of the 78 cases, 52 were found through community-based testing and 26 through contact tracing.

Of the 52 found through CBT, 17 cases were identified while isolated. Of the 26 found through contact tracing, all 26 were identified while in quarantine, said CHCC.

CHCC added that the vaccination statuses of these individuals were pending verification as of early morning yesterday.

In related news, *Saipan Tribune* obtained Sunday a statement from the CHCC board of trustees regarding its Dec. 1 decision to not move forward with amendments to its "CHCC School and Child Care Facilities and Communicable Disease Rules and Regulations."

The proposed amendments would have mandated COVID-19 vaccinations as a requirement for obtaining health certificates and possibly also for enrolling in any CNMI schools. In the statement, the board said the health and safety of CNMI residents are CHCC's and its board's top priority.

"While the current school health certificate requirements may allow for the COVID-19 vaccine to be

compulsory, the board decided to reject the proposed amendments to the school health certificate requirements, opting to focus on additional COVID-19 vaccine education. It is the goal of the board and the CHCC to help keep the community safe at all times," said the board.

A total of 558 COVID-19 shots were administered on Dec. 3, bringing the CNMI's vaccination rate to 87.9%, which CHCC said, "affords the community more protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death."

Also, 750 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Dec. 3 comprising travel and surveillance testing.

CHCC said that "vaccines are the best protection against the highly transmissible virus, and are readily available" at the Pedro C. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center vaccination site from Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm, and on Saturday from 8am-4pm. Registration can be completed on vaccinatecnmi.com, and individuals aged 18 and older are eligible to receive booster shots.

Registering for COVID-19 testing can be done through covidtesting.chcc.health. CHCC said that no code is required to register and that if no dates are showing then all spots have been filled. More dates will be announced, CHCC added.

Hofschneider: SNILD has no authority to pass local bill on casino gaming

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) said the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation has no authority to pass a House local bill that proposes to authorize, establish, and regulate casino gambling within the Third Senatorial District, the political name of Saipan and the Northern Islands.

Hofschneider, in a letter Friday to SNILD chair Sen. Vinnie Vinson F. Sablan (R-Saipan), said that House Local Bill 22-26 is not legally sufficient and therefore the SNILD does not have the authority to pass it.

The Senate president said SNILD cannot enact a local bill that supersedes or contradicts the authority of the Commonwealth Casino Commission, as established by Public Law 18-56.

He said moreover, SNILD cannot enact a local bill that increases the number of casino licenses in the Third Senatorial District when P.L. 18-56 established only one exclusive license.

Hofschneider pointed out that HLB 22-26 provisions are contrary to P.L. 18-56.

Citing the need to secure a source of funding for the 25% portion of the retirees' pensions and anticipating the revocation of the exclusive Saipan casino license of the struggling Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, House floor leader Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan) introduced HLB 22-26 last Oct. 29, proposing to increase the number of casino licenses on Saipan from one to five.

The legislation has been referred to a SNILD Committee because it has not met the required appearances on the House agenda.

Yumul stated in the bill that SNILD has the authority to enact a casino law through a local bill pursuant to P.L. 18-56.

Yumul cited a Commonwealth Code pertaining to exclusion from gambling prohibition which provides that "casino gaming and wagering is authorized in the Commonwealth provided that such gaming and wagering occurs in the casino facilities of the casino operator licensed pursuant to this chapter or in a casino licensed pursuant to the laws of a Senatorial District."

Hofschneider said the assertion is that P.L. 18-56 authorized casino gaming in the CNMI so the SNILD can enact its own local bill to establish a casino act. There are two problems, though, with this reliance on P.L. 18-56 justification, Hofschneider said.

First, he said, neither P.L.

18-56 nor the Commonwealth Code pertaining to exclusion from gambling prohibition intended or expressly authorized any of the senatorial districts to establish its own casino law.

At that time, the president said, the First (Rota) and Second (Tinian ang Aguiguan) senatorial districts previously established their own casino acts through local initiatives that were authorized by the NMI Constitution.

He said the only senatorial district that did not have a casino act was the Third Senatorial District.

Hofschneider said P.L. 18-56 was the vehicle that established a casino law in the Commonwealth but excluded regulation of the First and Second Senatorial District casinos.

He said P.L. 18-56 does not expressly state that the Third Senatorial District or any other district may establish its own casino law.

He said P.L. 18-56 simply intended to ratify the casino gaming already authorized in the First and Second Senatorial Districts and at the same time authorize an exclusive license casino in the Third Sen-

atorial District to be regulated by P.L. 18-56.

Second, Hofschneider said, a casino licensed pursuant to the laws of a senatorial district can only be established by a law enacted through a local initiative pursuant to the NMI Constitution, which provides that "gambling is prohibited in the NMI except as provided by Commonwealth law or established through initiative in the Commonwealth or in any senatorial district."

He said the First and Second senatorial districts successfully established their local casinos through local initiative.

He said the CNMI Supreme Court has already made it clear that SNILD does not have the authority to establish a local casino through the enactment of a local bill. He said HLB 22-26 is a local bill intended to be enacted by SNILD as opposed to a local initiative enacted by the people of the Third Senatorial District.

Hofschneider said P.L. 18-56 did not expressly authorize local delegations to establish local casinos through local bills.

He said the only local law authorized to establish local casinos is a local initiative pursuant to the NMI Constitution Article 21.

The senator said the only other way to establish a casino in a senatorial district is through the enactment of a Commonwealth law. Here, he said, P.L. 18-56 was enacted to

establish a casino in the Commonwealth but specifically the Third Senatorial District because the First and Second senatorial districts already had local casinos established by local initiatives.

Hofschneider said P.L. 18-56 excludes enforcement of the casino initiatives of the First and Second senatorial districts, which is evidence that P.L. 18-56 was intended to only regulate casinos in the Third Senatorial District.



TREE LIGHTING

Bad weather did not stop employees of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center from installing Christmas lights on a tree in front of the Commonwealth Election Commission office in Susupe last week. The Christmas Village and Christmas Tree Lighting by first lady Diann Torres and Wella Palacios was supposed to be done last Sunday, but was canceled due to rain.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Wanted: Board members for MANGO

The Marianas Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations, or MANGO, is looking for board members and is inviting the community to submit letters of interest and résumés for a seat in their board of directors.

The ideal candidate is compassionate, ethical; competent, creative, and an advocate for the nonprofit's mission, program, and activities.

Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attendance in monthly

board of director's meetings

- Active participation and attendance at events, meetings, and conferences on behalf of MANGO

- Active participation in working committee meetings

- Monitoring and strengthening programs and services

- Ensuring ethical integrity

- Enhancing the organization's public standing.

Applicants are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes via email to admin@mangocnmi.org.

MANGO is a 501(c)(3) and CNMI tax-exempted

nonprofit whose principal purpose is to provide leadership and technical assistance for nonprofit organizations in the CNMI.

For additional information, contact MANGO executive director Frances Sablan, at fsablan@mangocnmi.org. (PR)

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JGO will hear testimony of Torres, DPS chief Deleon Guerrero on Friday

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives' Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee will hear the testimony this Friday of Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert Alepuyo Deleon Guerrero, as well as that of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Committee chair Rep. Celine R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said Monday night that they intend to press ahead with their investigation in the case.

Babauta also told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that House Vice Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao would be leading the JGO meeting that day (Tuesday) with no witnesses and would recess until this Friday.

DPS Commissioner Deleon

Guerrero was supposed to testify yesterday.

Babauta said they have to conduct the meeting yesterday because they put out a notice of the meeting/hearing pursuant to the Open Government Act and that she didn't cancel it.

Deleon Guerrero's counsel, Anthony Aguon, said Monday that the commissioner was prepared to testify yesterday. *Saipan Tribune* was unable to independently verify if Torres will testify this Friday.

The Democrat-controlled JGO is investigating Torres' expenditures of public funds travels. The governor is a Republican.

In a press statement Monday night, Babauta said that, in light of the escalating number



Babauta



Torres



Guerrero

of positive COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth, the JGO Committee has been in meetings all day Monday with Legislative Bureau director Perry Tenorio and the House counsels, in consultation with House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez.

She said the JGO Committee collectively made a decision to delay the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 7, to this Friday while the Legislative Bureau prepares the

building for everyone's safety.

"Our responsibility to public health and to the safety of the community comes first," the chair said.

In keeping with the more stringent COVID-19 control measures implemented this week, the public is advised that seating in the House chamber for this Friday's JGO hearing may

Kotten Tinian closed until Friday

Kotten Tinian, which has been closed since Nov. 30, 2021, will remain closed to the public until Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. Regular business hours will resume Monday, Dec. 13, 2021.

The CNMI Supreme Court first ordered the closure of Kotten Tinian until Dec. 6, 2021, due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 and associated sanitization. That closure has been extended to Dec. 10, 2021.

While facilities are closed, Judiciary personnel may be teleworking or activated for emergency and essential services. Bail, family protection, emergency and time-sensitive hearings may be set consistent with Supreme Court Order No. 2020-ADM-0024-MSC (Amended COVID-19 Order No. 16) or latest order thereof and subsequent court orders. Visit the Judiciary's website at www.nmjudiciary.com for court information and www.cnmilaw.org to review the order. (PR)

be restricted to ensure social distancing.

Torres signed an order last Sunday shutting down non-essential agencies in the government for 14 days and advising all non-essential workers to stay home. Babauta said the presiding officers of the Leg-

Legislature to remain open

The Legislature announced yesterday that it will remain open to carry out its duties and responsibilities.

The presiding officers of the 22nd Legislature, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez and Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider, jointly agreed that, as a separate branch of government, the Legislative Branch is obligated to forge ahead with legislative matters of great importance to the Commonwealth.

Despite the Executive Branch's declaration of a public health emergency, both houses of the Legislature continue to conduct legislative sessions, hearings, and meetings to deliberate on matters of health, education, commerce, infrastructure development, and public safety that are of significant importance to the well-being and safety of residents and visitors of the CNMI.

On Nov. 9, 2021, the Legislature issued *Legislative COVID Protocol Directive 2021-01* as a proactive measure to ensure the safety of the legislative members and staff, to include limiting public access into the building.

On Nov. 30, 2021, the presiding officers of the Legislature extended Section 2 of *Legislative COVID Protocol Directive 2021-01*, until the end of December or until further notice.

In line with the *Legislative*

islature met Monday and decided to remain in operation.

"The burden to reconcile the need to be vigilant in light of recent surges in COVID-19 cases with the need to continue our legislative mission weighed heavily on your JGO Committee," Babauta said.

COVID Protocol Directive 2021-01, as amended:

■ No person who is not a legislative member, a members' staff, or a Legislative Bureau employee shall enter the legislative building. As stated in the directive, an exemption is permitted to persons whose attendance is required and authorized at a legislative session, hearing, or meeting by the presiding officer of the respective chamber. An individual whose attendance is required may request to appear virtually through a written request provided 24 hours prior to the scheduled event to the presiding officers of the Legislature, chairpersons of the legislative standing committees, or chairpersons of the legislative delegation, respectively.

■ Delivery of items or correspondences to the legislative building are to be directed to the designated entrances of the House of Representatives or the Senate, respectively.

The public is encouraged to be kept abreast of scheduled legislative sessions, hearings, and meetings made available to the viewing public on Channel 23 or broadcasted live on the Legislature's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cnmilegislature.

To access the schedule of legislative events or proposed legislation of the 22nd NMCL, visit www.cnmileg.net. (PR)

Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc. (Mobil) is a subsidiary of Exxon Mobil Corporation – one of the world's largest publicly traded international oil and gas company, which holds an industry-leading inventory of resources and is one of the world's largest integrated refiners, marketers of petroleum products and chemical manufacturers. This is your opportunity to join this dynamic company and become part of the team that thrives in a fast-paced, controls-oriented environment as:

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Job Description:

Performs day to day activities to safely operate a petroleum distribution facility. Maintains SSH&E (Safety, Security, Health and Environment) standards pursuant to local and federal regulations and company's policies, procedures and guidelines. Performs operations of marine tanker receiving, bunkering, tank truck loading, pipeline transfer, product quality testing, handling and storage of bulk and packaged petroleum products while delivering premier product quality and customer service.

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- Tinian Bulk Plant, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Job Duties:

- Executes and complies with company's operational procedures and systems, policies and guidelines by using terminal manuals and procedures, loss prevention tools, and corporate & industry standards.
- Conducts routine facility inspections. Maintains housekeeping and conducts maintenance and repairs to ensure safe operating conditions.
- Performs safe marine terminal operations, shore to ship and ship to shore transfers of bulk petroleum products, tank truck loading, pipeline transfers and product quality testing.
- Adheres to safety and environmental programs. Takes a dynamic and proactive approach to protect the environment and the safety, health and security of employees, customers and public.
- Administratively prepares and submits regulatory and internal reports associated with the handling, storage and product movement of the petroleum distribution terminal. Performs oil loss monitoring duties.
- Interfaces with third party contractors, local and federal government agencies, internal and external customers and ExxonMobil's global network system.
- Conducts simple math calculations and conversions of temperature, weights and measures.

Job Requirements:

- Experience in safe petroleum handling, distribution and storage or related field
- Familiarity with computer applications in spreadsheet and word processing (i.e., MS Word and Excel)
- Understanding of U.S. federal and local regulations as applicable to petroleum handling, storage, and distribution
- Ability to work shifts based on a 24-hour work day, work extended hours, weekends, and holidays
- Good interpersonal skills, ability to communicate verbally and in writing in English

Preference will be given to candidates with relevant experience in marine terminal operations and with previous experience in petroleum industry

If you are interested in and/or meet the qualifications for this position, please submit your resume on or before December 31, 2021 to the following:

Attention to:
Ramon Villagomez,
Field Operations Manager-CNMI
P.O. Box 500367 CK, Saipan, MP 96950
Fax: (670) 236-8190
Email: ramon.villagomez@exxonmobil.com
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Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery
(CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2021-041	CDBG-DR Internal Auditor (1-Position) RE-ANNOUNCEMENT	UNGRADED \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 per annum	Dec. 08, 2021	Jan. 07, 2022 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/

JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

ROBERT TENORIO TORRES F0197
ATTORNEY AT LAW
P.O. Box 500740 CK, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 234-7859 | Fax. (670) 234-5749
E-mail: robert.torres@rtllawgroup.com
Attorney for Petitioner Norman T. Tenorio,

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF)
Civil Action No. 21-0314
NOTICE OF HEARING AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
SOLEDAD TAKAI TENORIO,)
DATE: December 16, 2021
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
JUDGE: Joseph N. Camacho
Testator.)

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRD, CLAIMANTS,
OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE SOLEDAD TAKAI
TENORIO OR HER ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **Norman T. Tenorio** has filed petition the Superior Court of Northern Marianas Islands to Probate the Will and Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Soledad Takai Tenorio, the deceased. The attorney for Petitioner is **Robert T. Torres**, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plate Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya) P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. All interested persons and entities should appear at the hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or her Estate are hereby required by the law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claims should also be sent to **ROBERT T. TORRES**, Attorney at Law, at the address hereinabove indicated.

Respectfully submitted this 24th day of November 2021.

/s/ _____
CLERK OF COURT/SEPUTY CLERK

SIS' Hwang headed for Princeton on QuestBridge scholarship

Saipan International School senior Cevina Hwang was awarded a QuestBridge scholarship on Dec. 2 to attend Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey beginning in the fall of 2022 on a full scholarship.

This is SIS's third QuestBridge recipient in as many years and one of the few from the CNMI.

Princeton University is a private Ivy League research university founded in 1746 as the College of New Jersey. The storied university is the fourth-oldest institution of higher education in the United States and one of the nine co-

lonial colleges chartered before the American Revolution.

"In addition to being able to attend a top school, I'm excited about exploring subjects like biology and chemistry during my undergraduate years so that I can successfully prepare myself for dental school," Hwang said. "I'm also super glad that I get to be close to my older sister who is working in Philadelphia after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania."

The QuestBridge National College Match is a national program that connects high-achieving high school seniors



Hwang

with full four-year scholarships to the nation's top colleges. Out of more than 16,500 applicants, QuestBridge selected 6,312 finalists to be considered for the QuestBridge Na-

tional College Match Scholarship (Match Scholarship). This year, QuestBridge's 45 college partners matched with 1,674 finalists, who are recognized as Match Scholarship Recipients. This is the highest number of Match Scholarship Recipients to date for QuestBridge. Hwang was one of 110 students nationwide matched with Princeton.

"Cevina is a smart, ambitious, creative, and kind student," SIS college counselor Whit Altizer said. "Princeton and QuestBridge are lucky to have her as part of their organizations. SIS has been privi-

leged to have Cevina since she was in preschool, so our excitement runs high in the Gecko community."

The QuestBridge scholarship is offered as part of a

SHEFA deadline extended to Dec. 15

The Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance application has been extended to Dec. 15, 2021.

The application can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/shefa21-22>. New applicants must provide a letter of admission (acceptance letter), proof of CNMI residency, a copy of a valid US passport or government issued ID, most recent official transcript, a class schedule showing full time status, proof of vote cast at the last general or mid-term election, and a career assessment profile.

More information can be obtained by contacting the SHEFA office at (670) 233-5995 or by emailing saipan-shefa@gmail.com.

The public is also reminded that the deadline for the CNMI Scholarship program is also December 15, 2021. The application can be accessed at www.cnmischolarship.net.

Those who need assistance in applying for any of these scholarship programs can contact any of Northern Mari-

anas College's financial aid staff below:

Daisy Manglona-Propst

Director, Financial Aid
Tel: 237-6792

daisy.propst@marianas.edu

Verna Deleon Guerrero

Financial Aid Counselor
Tel: 237-6793

verna.dlguerrero@marianas.edu

Colleen Villagomez

Financial Aid Specialist
Tel: 237-6794

colleen.villagomez@marianas.edu

Roy Alegre

Financial Aid Specialist
Tel: 237-6791

roy.alegre@marianas.edu

For more information about registering for classes for the upcoming Spring 2022 semester or to apply for admission, contact the NMC Office of Admissions and Records at 237-6768/6769/6771 or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

Casino licensee wants to open casino on Rota on Christmas Eve but...

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Korean company, whose five-year casino license is expiring next year, wants to open its casino on Rota this Dec. 24, 2021, but the Rota Casino Gaming Commission needs a minimum funding of \$740,000 in order for the casino operation to move forward.

Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig disclosed Rota casino licensee IH Corp's plan and the needed budget for the commission in his letter yesterday to Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Ro-

ta) and Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who co-chair the Rota Legislative Delegation.

As it stands now, IH Corp has yet to build a casino the past four years, Atalig said in his letter, but has asked the commission to open its casino this Dec. 24.

Saipan Tribune learned from a Rota official who requested anonymity that the company rents a small building on Rota and has put some slot machines instead of poker machines, and they call it a "casino."

Atalig said that with the company's aggressive move

to start its casino, it behooves the commission to find a solution as soon possible.

Atalig said the challenge facing the commission right now is not having funding to hire critical staff and to train them in the regulatory requirements of casino operations.

He said to prepare the commission as a functioning entity, they need a minimum funding of \$740,000 to cover salaries, training, and office needs.

Atalig said with the assistance of the Rota municipality and financial support from the central government, the com-

mission can move forward in allowing casino operation on the island.

He said the revitalization of Rota's economy rests in part on an entity like the Rota Casino Gaming Commission operating on a positive image of competency in regulating casino operations.

Rota voters overwhelmingly voted to allow casino operation on Rota via a public initiative in the 1997 general elections.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Hafa Adai
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Charging the parents of school shooters should become standard practice

Prosecutors in the recent Michigan school shooting by a 15-year-old student that left four dead also have filed manslaughter charges against the shooter's parents, whose gun he used. This should become standard practice for school shooting cases when the young shooters are only armed because of their parents' carelessness.

The uniquely modern, uniquely American phenomenon of mass school shootings is undoubtedly tied to the proliferation of guns and the loosening of gun restrictions that has happened throughout the U.S. in the past few decades. Tragedies like the one that played out in Michigan on Tuesday would have been unthinkable in America a few generations ago. It's still unthinkable today in most of the advanced world—which, unlike the U.S., generally enforces reasonable national gun policies.

Among the few firearms restrictions still in place everywhere in America today is the requirement that most minors cannot legally have access to most guns. The youth age limit varies by state, and there are exceptions regarding hunting in the presence of adults. But generally, the premise that guns don't belong in the hands of kids is among the few points of universal agreement today.

That's why so many school shooters use guns owned by their parents; it's the easiest way for them to obtain firearms. A Washington Post analysis shows that well over half the school shootings in the country since 1999 were committed with guns the young shooters found in their homes.

That was the case with the shooter who murdered 20 small children and six adults in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012—the worst grade-school massacre in U.S. history—after obtaining his firearms from an arsenal legally stockpiled by his mother (who became her son's first victim). And it was the case Tuesday at Oxford High School, near Detroit, where 15-year-old Ethan Crumbley allegedly killed four classmates with a semi-automatic handgun his father had bought just four days earlier.

How Crumbley came to possess the gun—whether his parents gave it to him, or he just took it—is a question that needs to be answered, but no scenario is acceptable for such negligence. Failing to keep a gun safely out of reach of kids is itself a criminal offense in many jurisdictions. In this case, there is evidence that Crumbley posed with the gun in social media postings before the shooting, indicating his parents at the very least didn't make it difficult for him to access it.

What any charges against the parents might look like would be determined by circumstances revealed in the continuing investigation. But in this case and others going forward, parents who allow their kids to get ahold of their guns and use them in these rampages should be viewed as accomplices, witting or otherwise, and charged accordingly. America's broader gun crisis is bad enough without the added ammunition of tragically lax parenting.

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See EDITORIAL on next page



Only winning over skeptics can avoid shocks like omicron

How do we ensure that the world has access to the COVID-19 vaccines needed to prevent more variants like the latest omicron strain from emerging?

One disturbingly common response to calls from the World Health Organization and others to increase the availability of doses in emerging economies is to suggest supply isn't really the problem, but demand. South Africa, where omicron was first identified, provides one data point in favor of this hypothesis. Despite the fact that barely 24% of the population has been fully vaccinated, the Department of Health last week asked Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer Inc. to suspend delivery of vaccines because its existing stockpile was more than enough at current lackluster rates of uptake.

To be clear, outside of the rich world demand is clearly not the main constraining factor on inoculations. All but 14 of the 51 nations with supply agreements sufficient to cover their entire populations are high-income countries, according to data collected by Unicef.

Vaccine manufacturing capacity, which a database kept by Duke University puts at 11.435 billion doses this year, is simply insufficient to double-dose everyone on the planet. The rich nations where most shots have been developed have managed to hog the lion's share of both first, second and third boosters so far.

Next year, though, that's likely to change. UNICEF's figures suggest that we'll have capacity to produce about 23.53 billion doses, more than enough to put a needle in every person on the planet three times over. At that point, hesitancy in the unvaccinated world may become a real problem—and everything we're doing now is likely to make it worse.

Tackling the reluctance of people to take action against epidemic disease isn't a new problem. Indeed, from the heyday of smallpox eradication after World War II to the current campaign to snuff out the last vestiges of polio and guinea worm, it's at the heart of what groups like the WHO do year after year.

The lessons of that experience for lower-income nations are fairly straightforward. People need outside public health experts to show a genuine interest in the problems they face, from a lack of drinking water, sanitation and clean cooking facilities to more neglected and endemic diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and diarrhea. Ideally, vaccines should form part of a package of measures to improve health, rather than be a one-time campaign parachuted into remote communities. If the motivations of those driving the push and the direct impacts on those receiving doses are unclear, that can lead to suspicion and conspiracy theories, especially among vulnerable populations.

Looked at that way, it's clear why our current strategy is set-

By DAVID FICKLING

Bloomberg Opinion

David Fickling is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering commodities, as well as industrial and consumer companies. He has been a reporter for Bloomberg News, Dow Jones, the Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times and the Guardian.



ting itself up for failure. By not ensuring sufficient doses for the world and hoarding those we do have, rich nations are sending a strong signal that vaccinations don't really matter.

Sub-Saharan Africa in particular has reason to take outside advice with a pinch of salt. For reasons that are still unclear but probably relate to the youth of the population (around 1 in 20 Africans are over the age of 60, compared to about a quarter of Europeans and North Americans), mortality and severe sickness from COVID-19 has been far lower than other parts of the world. The comparatively affluent and old South Africa is a notable exception.

Unlike polio, which frequently causes prominent leg and spine deformities, the effects of COVID aren't particularly visible, making vaccination a harder sell to skeptics. In asking Africans to take doses once they become available, we're appealing to them to pull together for the sake of our own elder populations, while showing little evidence of solidarity in the other direction.

There are some advantages in this fight. Africa is already more urbanized than much of Asia, meaning there's a smaller rural population disconnected from routine health information. Its public health systems, while starved of funding, are well set up to tackle COVID because communicable diseases have always been the main threat to local populations. That contrasts with richer countries, which direct resources more toward conditions of aging, such as cancer and heart disease. The long, bitter struggle to roll out polio vaccines, HIV antiretrovirals and tuberculosis antibiotics also means we have a head start in knowing what problems to address.

We have to heed those lessons and work fast. While the small size of Africa's over-60 population might be protecting it from major outbreaks, the legacy of HIV and the prevalence of undernourishment mean there is an unusually large population with the weakened immune systems that are so conducive to cooking up new and concerning variants of COVID.

Richer countries may feel safe behind their walls of boosters and travel restrictions. Until the whole world is protected, though, those defenses will be under constant assault.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

My message to the members of the Democratic Party

My fellow Democrats and people of the CNMI, I want to express my concern and share with you my personal perspective on the present organization of the CNMI Democratic Party. This perception is not to be interpreted as a tool to undermine the Party and the efforts of many members, with exception of some within the Party, but to acknowledge the existence of organizational problem within the Party and to make serious efforts to correct such organization mistakes.

I grew with the Democratic Party and its predecessor, the Popular Party, from which I built my political career as your public servant. I had the honor and privilege to have served you in the municipal council, in the Congress of Micronesia, in the transitional CNMI Legislature and in the first CNMI Senate. I had the pleasure of being the leader of the young Popular Party movement. I am proud as your public servant to have contributed in the grand blueprint and shaping of our CNMI political future and quality of life for our people. The contributions of our political forefathers and my peers during the Trust Territory era leading up to the signing of the Covenant Agreement with the United States of America, our people obtaining U.S. citizenship and the introduction of a robust monetary economy into our lives warrant continuous celebration and appreciation.

Sadly, I have grave concern that the present Democratic Party leadership have exhibited little regard and lacking appreciation for the magnificent efforts and contributions of

previous CNMI leaders in the shaping of our political status and our role in the American political family during the infancy stage of our government. The present Democratic Party leadership top official denied a former speaker of the House of Representatives, Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero, who is a lifetime member of the Democratic Party and who happens to be my brother, whom I had asked to be my proxy to represent me at a Democratic Party Central Executive Committee meeting involving a negotiation with another political group. The Democratic Party chairwoman and her cohort behaved unprofessionally and lacking decorum. For chairperson Nola Hix, a young and arrogant Democratic official to tell a former CNMI speaker of the House and to any former public official for that matter, "This is not your time," is insulting and condescending. It is very disrespectful and offensive when she is a Refaluwasch treating an elder Refaluwasch official that way in an official meeting. There is an old saying in our Refaluwasch culture, "if you don't know where you came from, you won't know where you are going in the future."

While this other issue may be moot because an action initiated by the Democratic Party chairwoman had already taken place and decided by a few select individuals within the full CEC membership to vet applicants for the gubernatorial candidacy, Rota and Tinian Democratic CEC members and some others from Saipan did not participate nor represented in the gubernato-

rial vetting process. In short, the vetting process was railroaded to select the preference of the Democratic Party chairperson, vice chairperson and a select few. Full participation by the CEC membership was absent.

The Party professes to cultivate transparency, participation and fairness but its top officials do not live up to these values in practice. The Democratic Party membership must do something to correct these serious faults being perpetuated by arrogant and self-aggrandizing individuals within the Party.

The Party also must attend to procedural reporting on the following: (1) fund status on the DNC financial assistance; (2) overall Party financials, which include private donations and special election contribution; (3) travel reports of Party officials that attend national Democratic Party events; election of officers of the Party must be held according to the bylaws that is not being followed; (5) strategic planning report by CEC members.

There are too many loosely arranged organization planning that oftentimes are incoherent and thought out on impulse. I am sharing these concerns as constructive criticism and should be taken as measures to correct weaknesses of the Party and not as a weapon for any purpose because that is not what this letter is intended for.

Herman R. Deleon Guerrero

via email

A world of foolishness continues

After reading that the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. board had said no to mandating vaccinations for the youth, I was compelled to write this as it is truly disturbing to think these professionals will put what is clearly politics over the health and safety of our children. Given the approval of federal agencies that it is OK and safe for youths in a certain age groups to get vaccinated, it sent chills through me to hear such an awful decision. I hate to say it and I pray it never happens but if one youth dies from COVID-19 that could have been prevented, it is on the CHCC board for their awful decision.

As parents we are in a rush to make sure our children are vaccinated and mothers are even given a checklist of vaccinations they never question that their child will need to protect their child from diseases and health challenges. But now we have to beg people to save their lives all because they listen to social media quackery and politics. I keep telling readers: Social media is two-edged sword and you have to careful of getting cut.

The entire world is now facing the most dangerous virus to mankind in the history of the world and this board is saying no to the need for them to be vaccinated based on nothing but speculation. The science behind the vaccine is based on real data driven by test groups to make sure it is safe but the board wants to ignore the medical science that says it's safe. The idea that some people don't want to get vaccinated and it's their right is just downright foolishness. If you make sure your child gets all their

vaccination shots as a baby, what in the world is wrong with them getting vaccinated for this new virus that is killing hundreds of millions all over the world? There is no sound reasoning why these students shouldn't be required to be vaccinated other than the "politics of rights," which is the true travesty throughout the world.

I can remember asking my students over the years in U.S. Government classes: What is the most dangerous and worse right we have? None of the thousands of students I have asked that question ever came up with the right answer. The most dangerous and worse right is "the right to be a failure and even a danger to society with guns" but in this case with the CHCC board's decision, it is the spread of COVID that will kill children and adults. The same is true with gun ownership as now we are seeing how youth are even using guns to kill their fellow students in what are clearly terroristic acts. I beg to ask, what in the world is more important than saving lives? I'm sure most will agree there is nothing more important than saving lives.

I can only hope and pray that parents are smarter than the CHCC board and get their child vaccinated before sending them to school as the only thing known to mankind to fight this deadly COVID-19 is vaccination. I'm in Germany now and their new chancellor, Olaf Scholz, is getting ready to ask their legislators to create a law mandating that every citizen be vaccinated or be removed from all public activities. He knows about the rights

and democracy claims being invoked but he says the health of the entire nation is far more important than any individual right and I totally agree with Chancellor Scholz and the CNMI should follow his example. This is why I continue to invoke "one people one direction" because it is the biggest challenge to mankind with the issues we face, especially with this virus that infects millions every day throughout the world.

We eat all kinds of foods from all over the world and never even question if it is safe but now people want to question a proven vaccine, which is really foolishness! The entire world is in a battle that has never been experienced before in the recorded history of mankind and we as the people of the world can't even work together as "one people" because of the foolishness of political rights. The COVID vaccinations have yet to kill anyone after billions have been vaccinated and we still have the foolish hold-outs who don't have a leg to stand on when it comes to being vaccinated. Please get your child vaccinated because I can tell you, there is no second chance if your child gets COVID. Be smart and don't follow the foolishness of not getting yourself and your child vaccinated because you will surely be forever mad and never forgive yourself when you are looking at your child in a casket.

Ambrose M. Bennett

Kagman, Saipan

EDITORIAL

From Page 8

Trigger fingers: 1 person kills, but more can be responsible

Michigan prosecutors think they have a strong involuntary manslaughter case against the now-apprehended parents of the 15-year-old boy who fatally shot four of his high school classmates last Tuesday. We concur.

Though it is the teen who squeezed the trigger, it was his dad who just days earlier bought him as a gift what would become the murder weapon, even though Michigan's legal age of handgun ownership is 18. And just hours before the high school turned into a live-fire zone, both mother and father were called to the school to meet with administrators and shown a drawing the boy had made with a person bleeding and the words "help me."






At the meeting, says prosecutor Karen McDonald, the two "were advised that they were required to get their son into counseling within 48 hours." Yet, she says, never did they mention that their son might have a weapon on his person, even as they resisted a request to take him home for the day.

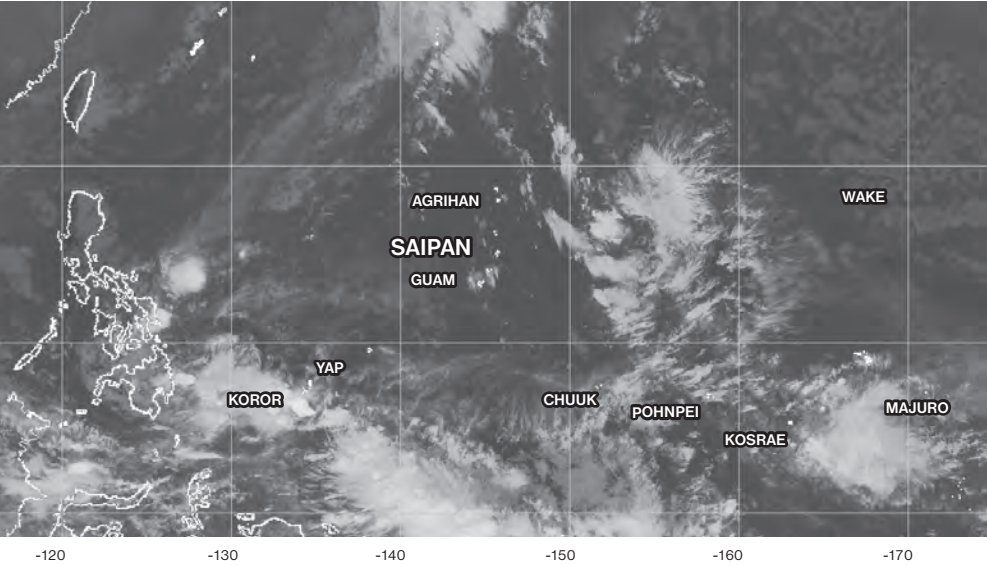
Whether two parents will be found guilty in what is a relatively novel prosecution remains to be seen, but there is a larger issue here. Though disturbed young gunmen are legally guilty

of murder at Sandy Hook Elementary, and at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and at Columbine High School, not to mention in so many killings that'll never make the front page, their impulse to murder did not materialize out of thin air.

Guns don't kill people, say the NRA zealots, people kill people. Of course they're dead wrong about that—people with guns can kill with ease and speed and callousness that people without guns cannot—but the grain of truth is that it's rarely only a single trigger puller who causes carnage. While the official culpability usually rests with one, morally many are implicated. Someone gives a young, unstable man a gun. Someone feeds him with toxic revenge fantasies. Someone else sees warning signs and looks the other way. Few are guilty; many are responsible.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly sunny with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers.	
86°	76°	86°	76°	87°	77°	87°	78°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:32 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows a band of scattered showers already moving into the CNMI and nearing Guam, associated with a large upper low east of the region near 16N153E. Winds are moderate southeast on the back side of a surface trough west of the islands. Seas at the Ipan buoy are around 9.5 feet. Past altimetry shows combined seas up to around 11 feet, leaving room for a 3-4 ft NNW swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.


Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor



onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Thursday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Friday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Saturday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Sunday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	9:23 AM	8:52 PM	-
Wednesday	10:21 AM	9:55 PM	-
Thursday	11:12 AM	10:55 PM	-
Friday	11:57 AM	11:50 PM	-
Saturday	-	12:41 AM	1:14 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 63°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	43° / 21°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	73° / 63°	
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	79° / 64°	
London	Showers	55° / 34°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	78° / 50°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 75°	
Melbourne	Rain	73° / 52°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81° / 72°	
New York	Partly Cloudy	50° / 34°	
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	55° / 45°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 36°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	54° / 30°	
Rome	Sunny	57° / 41°	
Salem	Cloudy	52° / 39°	
San Francisco	Sunny	60° / 45°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 19°	
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	54° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	48° / 33°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:29 AM	Low Tide	-0.76	
11:58 AM	High Tide	1.80	
5:24 PM	Low Tide	1.17	
9:40 PM	High Tide	1.66	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA117/183				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA117/183				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	1303	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	1304	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

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Business

Biden touts savings on insulin and other drugs for Americans

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden pledged Monday that his social agenda legislation would deliver tangible savings on prescription drugs for all Americans. Relief that consumers have clamored for is now in sight, he asserted.

But first the bill has to pass Congress, where plenty of obstacles remain in its path.

Biden tried to shift the focus to pocketbook provisions overlooked in the political machinations over his \$2 trillion legislation, which deals with issues from climate to family life and taxes. Even before concerns over rising inflation, polls consistently showed support from Americans across the political spectrum for government action to lower drug costs.

"It's safe to say that all of us can agree that prescription drugs are outrageously expensive in this country," Biden said at the White House.

"I'm committed to using

every tool I have to lower prescription drug costs for Americans consistent with the drug companies getting a fair return on their investment," he added.

But even if Biden and his fellow Democrats succeed in their final push to pass the legislation, a major political difficulty awaits them: Dividends from their prescription drug provisions won't show up right away, while the pain of rising costs is real and present. Democrats will have to point to promised, not actual, savings in next year's midterm elections.

The biggest policy change—a system for Medicare to negotiate prices for prescription drugs—won't begin to deliver lower costs until 2025, and then only for a selected set of 10 medicines, as well as insulin products. The number of drugs subject to negotiations would build with time, reaching 100 in six

years and continuing to grow by 20 a year.

Other provisions would take effect earlier.

■ Copays for insulin would be limited to \$35 a month, starting in 2023. Biden called the high cost of insulin "one of the most egregious examples" of overpriced medicines. He was introduced at the White House by a young woman, Iesha Meza, who couldn't afford insulin for her Type 1 diabetes and was hospitalized in a coma.

■ Drugmakers would be required to pay rebates to Medicare if they raise prices faster than inflation, starting that same year. The provision would benefit people with private insurance as well.

■ Medicare recipients with high drug costs would finally get a cap on their annual financial exposure, \$2,000 starting in 2024.

■ Shingles vaccines and other shots covered under

Medicare's "Part D" pharmacy benefit would be cost-free to consumers, starting in 2024.

The social legislation has passed the House and is pending before the Senate, where the goal remains to pass it before Christmas.

The powerful pharmaceutical industry is maneuvering to strip out as much as possible of the prescription drug provisions, even block the entire bill. They argue that limits on their ability to set prices would stifle investment that fuels innovation.

In a statement following Biden's speech, Stephen J. Uhl, head of the industry lobby Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, said "a damaging bill jammed through a partisan process will not provide patients struggling to afford their medicines meaningful relief."



Biden

But a recent overview of the legislation from the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation found that Medicare negotiations would "put downward pressure" on premiums

and out-of-pocket costs for seniors, and other provisions of the legislation would also reduce out-of-pocket costs for those who are privately insured.

A Kaiser Foundation poll from October found that more than 8 in 10 Americans favor allowing Medicare to negotiate prices, including 95% of Democrats, 82% of independents and 71% of Republicans. Most in the poll agreed with a statement that "even if U.S. prices were lower, drug companies would still make enough money to invest in the research needed to develop new drugs."

Biden said the industry has

lost the pricing debate with the American people.

"Diabetes, Alzheimer's, cancer—so many other diseases. They don't care whether you are a Democrat or Republican," said Biden.

"We need Congress to finish the job," he emphasized.

Core provisions of the Biden bill draw from earlier legislation that was supported by then-President Donald Trump but failed to advance. Those include the cap on out-of-pocket costs for seniors and penalties on drug companies that raise prices faster than inflation.

The \$35 monthly copays were also introduced under Trump through regulation, and are now available in a limited though growing number of Medicare prescription plans. Biden would greatly expand access and benefits.

Meanwhile, Medicare recipients are about to get an unwelcome illustration of the impact of high drug costs.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Trump media venture eyed by regulators; names Nunes CEO

NEW YORK (AP)—Regulators are looking into the deal that would bring Donald Trump's new social media company to the stock market, one that has attracted both legions of fans of the former president and people looking to make a quick profit. The company partnering with Trump Media & Technology Group acknowledged the inquiries in a filing it made with regulators on Monday. It also gave some financial forecasts for the company, which wants to rival Twitter and other platforms that banned Trump after the Jan. 6 Capitol riots, along with Netflix and other streaming video services. It said over the weekend that it's lined up \$1 billion in investments from a group of unnamed institutional investors. Separately, Trump Media announced that Rep. Devin Nunes, a Republican from California, will leave Congress to become the company's chief executive in January.

Scientist behind UK vaccine says next pandemic may be worse

LONDON (AP)—One of the scientists behind the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is warning that the next pandemic may be more contagious and more lethal unless more money is devoted to research and preparations to fight emerging viral threats. In excerpts released before a speech Monday, Professor Sarah Gilbert says the scientific advances made in fighting deadly viruses "must not be lost" because of the cost of fighting the current pandemic. "This will not be the last time a virus threatens our lives and our livelihoods," Gilbert is expected to say. "The truth is, the next one could be worse. It could be more contagious, or more lethal, or both." Gilbert will be speaking Monday night when she delivers this year's Richard Dimbleby lecture, named after the late broadcaster who was the BBC's first war correspondent and a pioneer of television news in Britain. The annual televised lecture features addresses by influential figures in business, science and government.

Hedge fund founder Steinhardt will return looted antiquities

NEW YORK (AP)—Billionaire hedge fund manager Michael Steinhardt has agreed to turn over \$70 million worth of stolen antiquities and will be subject to an unprecedented lifetime ban on acquiring antiquities, the Manhattan district attorney announced Monday. In return, Steinhardt, a philanthropist who is chair of the Steinhardt Foundation for Jewish Life and co-founder of Birthright Israel, an organization that sends young Jews on free trips to Israel, will not face criminal charges for acquiring pieces that were illegally smuggled out of 11 countries including Egypt, Greece, Israel, Syria and Turkey, prosecutors said. "For decades, Michael Steinhardt displayed a rapacious appetite for plundered artifacts without concern for the legality of his actions, the legitimacy of the pieces he bought and sold, or the grievous cultural damage he wrought across the globe," District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. said in a news release.

China's November exports rise 21.4% but growth eases

BEIJING (AP)—China's exports rose by double digits in November but growth declined, while imports accelerated in a sign of stronger domestic demand. Exports rose 21.4% over a year earlier to \$325.5 billion, decelerating from October's 27.1% growth, customs data showed Tuesday. Imports surged 31.7% to \$253.8 billion, up from the previous month's 20.6% rate. China's exports have been boosted by foreign demand at a time when other global competitors are hampered by anti-coronavirus controls. Stronger imports suggest consumer and other demand is rebounding after a dip brought on by a government crackdown on debt in the real estate industry. Economic growth sank to an unexpectedly low 4.9% over a year earlier in the three months ending in September. Factory activity also was hampered by power shortages that started in September and the global shortage of semiconductors used in products from cars to smartphones.



This photo shows a tunnel inside the Red Hill Underground Fuel Storage Facility in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on Jan. 26, 2018.

AP

Navy halts use of fuel storage complex above Hawaii aquifer

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii

(AP)—The U.S. Navy announced Monday that it is suspending use of a massive World War II-era fuel storage complex above a Hawaii aquifer that supplies nearly 20% of Honolulu's drinking water—following days of complaints that tap water smells like fuel and has sickened some people.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro traveled to Pearl Harbor and told reporters he was apologizing to everyone affected by what he called a "horrible, horrible tragedy."

Nearly 1,000 military households have complained about their tap water and some have said they have suffered physical ailments such as cramps and vomiting

recently after drinking it.

A water sample returned last week showed the presence of petroleum in water that comes from a well near the underground fuel tank complex that has been the source of multiple fuel leaks over the years.

Del Toro said officials were getting close to determining the cause of the problem and that when the investigation is completed and reviewed, the Navy will adopt water safety precautions.

"This will allow us to implement new safety actions before resuming operations," Del Toro said.

Separately, the state Department of Health ordered the Navy to suspend operations at the fuel facility, citing the gov-

ernor's power to act if there is "imminent peril to human health and safety or the environment" caused by a leak or operation of an underground storage tank system. The department said the Navy could appeal the order.

When asked if the Navy is considering permanently shutting down the fuel tank farm, Del Toro said all possibilities are being explored.

"We're looking at some very serious options here in the very near future," he said.

Fuel from the tanks is used to power many U.S. military ships and planes that patrol the Pacific Ocean, but Del Toro said the cutoff's impact on military operations would "have a very minimal effect, if any, at all right now."

Nation

Storm sweeps Hawaii, brings threat of ‘catastrophic’ floods

HONOLULU (AP)—A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and knocked out power across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead.

The National Weather Service said the storm brings the threat of “catastrophic flooding” in the coming days as a low pressure system slowly moves from east to west and lingered on the edge of the archipelago.

“Now is the time to make sure you have an emergency plan in place and supplies ready should you need to move away from rising water,” said Gov. David Ige, who issued a state of emergency for all of the state’s islands Monday night.

On Oahu, where four shelters had been opened, most of the beaches in Waikiki were empty Monday as only a few

people walked with umbrellas during passing heavy showers. Roadways were flooding in the area and cars crept through downtown as water gushed out of manhole covers.

Honolulu Fire Department workers rescued five boys, ages 9-10, from a raging stream, a fire department statement said.

One boy was rescued after he released his grip on a branch and the rushing waters took him to firefighters close by downstream, who grabbed him. Firefighters used a ladder to rescue another boy farther downstream and jumped into the stream to get the other three out of the water, the statement said.

None of the boys was injured and the fire department said that they had gone into the stream to play after school.

On Maui, power outages and flooding already have

been reported, with more than a foot (30 centimeters) of rain falling in some areas.

The relentless rain forced three couples from the U.S. mainland to postpone their Maui elopements, said Nicole Bonanno, owner of Bella Bloom Floral, a wedding florist and boutique in Wailea.

The weather also led to delayed flower deliveries, a lei company with no power and employees braving flooded roads littered with debris, Bonanno said.

“The roads, everything are a mess,” she said. “There are lots of trees down.”

Maui resident Jimmy Gomes was waiting for the lights to come back at his home on Monday after losing power at 6 p.m. Sunday. His rain gauge measured 7 inches (17.78 centimeters): “I haven’t seen this kind of rain in a long time,” he said.

With storm clouds in the background, beachgoers are seen on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu.

AP

NYC to impose vaccine mandate on private sector employers

NEW YORK (AP)—From big Wall Street banks to corner grocery stores, all private employers in New York City will have to require their workers to get vaccinated against COVID-19, the mayor announced Monday in the most sweeping vaccine mandate of any state or big city in the U.S.

The move by Mayor Bill de Blasio comes as cases are climbing again in the U.S. and the worrisome but little-understood omicron variant is gaining a toehold in the nation’s largest city and elsewhere around the country.

“We in New York City have decided to use a preemptive strike to really do something bold to stop the further growth of COVID and the dangers it’s causing to all of us,” he said.

De Blasio, a Democrat with just weeks left in office, said the mandate will take effect Dec. 27, with in-person workers needing to provide proof they have received at least one dose of the vaccine. And they will not be allowed to get out of the requirement by agreeing to regular COVID-19 test-

ing instead.

The measure will apply to roughly 184,000 businesses not covered by previous vaccine mandates, ranging from multinational corporations to mom-and-pop businesses in the city of 8.8 million people, according to a spokesperson for the mayor. The city’s private-sector workforce is 3.7 million.

Also, anyone 12 or older who wants to dine indoors at a restaurant, go to a gym or see a show will have to produce proof of having received two shots of the vaccine, up from the current requirement of one dose, the mayor said. And children 5 to 11 will have to show proof of at least one shot.

De Blasio said the moves are aimed at staving off a spike of infections amid holiday gatherings and the cold weather, which drives more people indoors, where the virus can spread more easily.

Phil Penta, who runs a specialty grocery store called Three Guys from Brooklyn, said the impending mandate could put him in a bind by forcing him to fire valued

employees who are holding out against the vaccine.

“Everybody wants to do the right thing, but the right thing is different for everybody,” said Penta, who said the vast majority of his roughly three dozen employees have been vaccinated. He added: “I respect the right to say they don’t want to take it.”

Vaccine rules across states and cities vary widely, with some states resisting any mandates and others requiring the shots for government employees or certain sectors that run a particularly high risk, such as health care workers.

But no state has announced a broad private-sector mandate like New York City’s, according to data compiled by the nonpartisan National Academy for State Health Policy.

President Joe Biden sought to impose a less far-reaching mandate nationally, requiring employees of businesses with 100 or more workers to either get vaccinated or undergo regular testing. But federal courts have blocked that plan for now ahead of the Jan. 4 deadline.



ACROSS THE NATION

Emmett Till investigation closed by feds; no new charges

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—The U.S. Justice Department said Monday it is ending its investigation into the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till, the Black teenager from Chicago who was abducted, tortured and killed after witnesses said he whistled at a white woman in Mississippi. The announcement came after the head of the department’s civil rights division and other officials met with several of Till’s relatives. Till’s family members said they were disappointed there will continue to be no accountability for the infamous killing, with no charges being filed against Carolyn Bryant Donham, the woman accused of lying about whether Till ever touched her. “Today is a day we will never forget,” Till’s cousin, the Rev. Wheeler Parker, said during a news conference in Chicago. “For 66 years we have suffered pain. ... I suffered tremendously.” The killing galvanized the civil rights movement after Till’s mother insisted on an open casket, and Jet magazine published photos of his brutalized body.

Justice Department sues Texas over new redistricting maps

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—The Justice Department sued Texas on Monday over its new redistricting maps, saying the plans discriminate against minority voters, particularly Latinos, who have fueled the state’s population boom. The lawsuit claims the Republican-controlled state violated part of the Voting Rights Act in drawing new district boundaries for its congressional delegation and state legislature. It’s the Biden Justice Department’s first legal action challenging a state’s maps since states be-

gan redrawing their maps this year to account for population changes. The lawsuit notes that most of Texas’ population growth over the past decade came from Black, Latino and Asian people, but alleges that the new maps scatter these voters across districts, diluting their votes and denying them opportunities to choose their representatives. It also argues the maps pack Black and Latino communities into bizarre-shaped districts—a Dallas-area one is described as “seahorse” shaped—while preserving seats for white Republicans.

British woman testifies about grooming by Ghislaine Maxwell

NEW YORK (AP)—A British woman testified Monday that Ghislaine Maxwell pressured her into giving Jeffrey Epstein sexual massages when she was still a teenager, assuring her she would have “fun” with him. The woman—testifying at Maxwell’s sex-abuse trial in New York City using the pseudonym “Kate” to protect her privacy—described one episode during the mid-1990s at Epstein’s Palm Beach, Florida estate where Maxwell left out a schoolgirl’s outfit with a pleated skirt for her to wear for the financier. “I thought it would be fun for you to take Jeffrey his tea in this outfit,” the witness recalled Maxwell telling her. After a sexual encounter that followed, the British socialite “asked me if I had fun” and told her, “You are such a good girl,” she said. The witness was the second woman to take the witness stand against Maxwell in federal court in Manhattan. But unlike the first, she was at the age of consent in Great Britain and the United States during her sexual contact with Epstein, so the judge barred her from detailing specific sex acts.

Asia

Hong Kong losing shine amid tough coronavirus restrictions

HONG KONG (AP)—The bustling, cosmopolitan business hub of Hong Kong may be losing its shine among foreign companies and expatriates with its stringent anti-pandemic rules requiring up to 21 days of quarantine for new arrivals.

The restrictions are discouraging both visitors and business travelers and add to other challenges the semi-autonomous Chinese territory faces as Beijing exerts ever more control over the former British colony.

For months, business circles have been urging the authorities to relax some quarantine restrictions, saying the city risks losing some of its international talent and appeal as a regional financial hub.

Some fumed when the city granted an exemption to the rules for JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, who visited the city for about a day in November. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said Dimon was given an exception related to the economy and that JPMorgan “is a very huge bank with key business in Hong Kong.”

Actress Nicole Kidman also was exempted when she visited the city to film parts



Sandeep Arora, center, from Punjab, India, a restaurant manager at Black Sheep's New Punjab Club, prepares food at its kitchen in Hong Kong on Nov. 26, 2021. AP

of a television series about expatriates, drawing ire from critics and local lawmakers over whether celebrities should be allowed to come and skip quarantine when Hong Kong residents pay dearly to return home.

Hong Kong's “COVID-zero” stance is in line with mainland China's policy of largely shutting its doors to the international world to try to prevent cases being brought into the country.

The restrictions have tightened further in light of the new omicron coronavirus variant, which was confirmed in at least four people in the city. Hong Kong authorities have

designated about 60 countries as high-risk areas including the U.S., Britain, Australia and any country with confirmed omicron cases.

For travelers from high-risk areas, only Hong Kong residents are allowed in and they must quarantine at their own expense for 21 days at a hotel. Travelers arriving from certain African countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe that have reported locally-transmitted omicron infections must spend seven days at a government facility while undergoing daily testing and then stay two weeks at a hotel, also at their own expense.

ous criticisms that Japan was too relaxed in its anti-virus measures.

Nepal reports first cases of omicron variant

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Nepalese authorities on Monday reported the first cases of the omicron variant in the Himalayan nation. A Health Ministry statement said a 66-year-old foreign national who arrived by air on Nov. 19 tested positive for the variant along with another 71-year-old person who was in contact with the tourist. Both are being kept in isolation under the supervision of a medical team. Authorities said 66 other people who had contact with the two confirmed cases tested negative. The tourist had both negative PCR test report and was fully vaccinated on arrival in Nepal.

Thailand reports ‘likely’ case of omicron

BANGKOK (AP)—A Thai health official said Monday that the country's first suspected case of the new omicron variant had been detected but authorities would withhold confirmation ahead of further test results. Head of the Department of Medical Sciences, Supakit Sirilak, said at a daily press briefing that the “likely” case of the omicron variant had been identified in an American businessman who entered Thailand from Spain. “The analysis result confirms a 99.92% chance of it being the omicron variant. The ministry and private laboratories are now running parallel tests and we will know the result today. Initially, it is likely to be the first omicron case of Thailand,” Supakit said at the briefing.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Gunmen kill mayor, wound another in PH

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP)—Motorcycle-riding gunmen killed a town mayor and wounded another in a brazen attack Monday that also killed their driver and caused villagers to flee to safety in a coastal village in the southern Philippines, police said. Mayor Darusalam Lajid of Al-Barka town was killed and Mayor Alih Sali of Akbar town was wounded by at least two men armed with pistols while walking in Zamboanga city shortly after arriving on a speedboat from their island province of Basilan, police said. A bodyguard of the two mayors was wounded and a driver who came to pick them up was killed, police said. Investigators were trying to identify the two gunmen and two companions who escaped on motorcycles and determine their motive, including the possibility that it involved a political rivalry.

Japan has 3rd omicron case as Kishida vows strict response

TOKYO (AP)—Japan confirmed on Monday its third case of the new omicron variant—a traveler entering from Italy—as Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vowed to take strict measures based on a worst-case scenario of a possible resurgence of infections. Japan has seen a sharp drop in daily COVID-19 cases since September. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters that the third confirmed case of the omicron strain is a man in his 30s who tested positive upon arrival from Italy at Tokyo's Haneda airport on Dec. 1 and has since been isolated. Kishida said in a policy speech before Parliament that he is taking no risks after previ-

World

Omicron vs. delta: Battle of coronavirus mutants critical

By **LAURA UNGAR** and
ANDREW MELDRUM
ASSOCIATED PRESS

As the omicron coronavirus variant spreads in southern Africa and pops up in countries all around the world, scientists are anxiously watching a battle play out that could determine the future of the pandemic. Can the latest competitor to the world-dominating delta

overthrow it? Some scientists, poring over data from South Africa and the United Kingdom, suggest omicron could emerge the victor.

“It's still early days, but increasingly, data is starting to trickle in, suggesting that omicron is likely to outcompete delta in many, if not all, places,” said Dr. Jacob Lemieux, who monitors variants for a research collaboration led by Harvard Medical School.

But others said Monday it's too soon to know how likely it is that omicron will spread more efficiently than delta, or, if it does, how fast it might take over.

“Especially here in the U.S., where we're seeing significant surges in delta, whether omicron's going to replace it I think we'll know in about two weeks,” said Matthew Binnicker, director of clinical virology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

Many critical questions



A woman is vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Hillbrow Clinic in Johannesburg, South Africa, Monday Dec. 6, 2021. AP

about omicron remain unanswered, including whether the virus causes milder or more severe illness and how much it might evade immunity from past COVID-19 illness or vaccines.

On the issue of spread, scientists point to what's happening in South Africa, where omicron was first detected. Omicron's speed in infecting people and achieving near dominance in South Africa has health experts worried that the country is at the start of a new wave that may come to overwhelm hospitals.

The new variant rapidly moved South Africa from a period of low transmission, averaging less than 200 new cases per day in mid-November, to more than 16,000 per day over the weekend. Omicron accounts for more than 90% of the new cases in Gauteng province, the epicenter of the new wave, according to experts. The new

variant is rapidly spreading and achieving dominance in South Africa's eight other provinces.

“The virus is spreading extraordinarily fast,” said Willem Hanekom, director of the Africa Health Research Institute. “If you look at the slopes of this wave that we're in at the moment, it's a much steeper slope than the first three waves that South Africa experienced. This indicates that it's spreading fast and it may therefore be a very transmissible virus.”

But Hanekom, who is also co-chair the South African COVID-19 Variants Research Consortium, said South Africa had such low numbers of delta cases when omicron emerged, “I don't think we can say” it out-competed delta.

Scientists say it's unclear whether omicron will behave the same way in other countries as it has in South Africa.

‘Haitian gang releases 3 hostages’

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—A religious group based in Ohio announced Monday that a violent gang in Haiti has released three more hostages, while another 12 remain abducted.

The statement from Christian Aid Ministries said the people were released on Sunday in Haiti and are “safe and seem to be in good spirits.” The group provided no further details.

On Nov. 21, the religious organization announced that the 400 Mawozo gang had released the first two hostages of a group of 17 kidnapped in mid-October. There are 12 adults and five children in the group of 16 U.S. citizens and one Canadian, including an 8-month-old.

The leader of the 400 Mawozo gang has threatened to

kill the hostages unless his demands are met. Authorities have said the gang was seeking \$1 million per person, although it wasn't immediately clear that included the children in the group.

“We are thankful to God that three more hostages were released last night,” said the statement from Christian Aid Ministries, an Anabaptist missions organization based in Berlin, Ohio. “As with the previous release, we are not able to provide the names of the people released, the circumstances of the release, or any other details.”

The group reiterated its request for supporters to devote Monday through Wednesday as days of prayer and fasting “to intercede for those who are still being held as well as those

who have been released.”

The release comes amid an ongoing spike in kidnappings in the capital of Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in Haiti, which is struggling to recover from the July 7 presidential assassination, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck in mid-August and a severe fuel shortage.

On Sunday, a gang leader known as “Ti Lapli” posted a YouTube video warning people not to cross in upcoming days through the Martissant community, which has been the site of violent clashes between warring gangs.

“Insecurity has increased,” the gang leader said. “I invite the people of Martissant to stock up on food and gasoline. The next few days will be difficult... We will not remain with our arms crossed in face of those who try to destroy us.”

Good Housekeeping

Creative ways to use the color **white**



A white sofa is paired with other white pieces like chairs, side tables and area rug.
(HANDOUT/TNS)

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

How do you incorporate white into your home? Can you mix different shades of white in the same space? While to some the color white may seem boring or bland, white can be used creatively and purposefully in a number of ways to make a big impact. From allowing the eye to visually rest to being used to help create a sense of contrast, here are some do's and don'ts of using the color white.

DO'S

- 1 Do consider using a monochromatic color scheme using tints, tones and shades of white.
- 2 Do incorporate pops of white through accessories and accents.
- 3 Do consider white for anchoring elements such as rugs, sofas and artwork.
- 4 Do consider white for architectural features such as cabinetry and countertops.
- 5 Do pair white with darker colors to add a sense of contrast.

9 uses for a pressure washer

By TOM MOOR
ANGIE'S LIST

If you enjoy cleaning, then you'll have a blast using a pressure washer.

Although you've probably used a pressure washer to remove stains from the side of your home or walkway, you may not realize they offer far more uses than cleaning siding (although they're great for that, too).

You can pressure wash all sorts of items around the house. So, pick a warm, sunny day and head outside to tackle some overdue cleaning projects.

1 Cars and trucks

Use a pressure washer to remove dirt from a car or truck—especially the wheel wells and undercarriage—where dirt and grime tend to build up.

Just make sure not to use a high-powered setting, or the car's clear coat or paint might come off.

Motorcycles, RVs and most other

types of motorized vehicles can also be cleaned with pressure washers.

2 Boats

Just like your vehicle, pressure washers will also take the dirt and algae off the exterior of boats. Again, don't use too high of a setting.

3 Outdoor furniture

Outdoor furniture gets extremely dirty, especially if you don't store it away for the winter. Pressure washing can make your outdoor furniture look like new again.

4 Decks and patios

Just like your home, car and driveway, decks and patios take a beating from Mother Nature, dirt and debris.

Pressure washing a deck or patio can remove dirt and grime and return it to its original color. You might be surprised what a difference it makes.

5 Fencing

Fences—whether wooden, vi-

nyl or aluminum—can be cleaned with a pressure washer.

6 Garage door, floor and driveway

Driveways and garage floors take a lashing from constant driving, while oil and fluid leaks cause staining. Use a pressure washer to easily eliminate these markings.

7 Grills

Grills get caked in grease and grime and can be extremely difficult to clean. Before pressure washing, make sure to detach any propane or electrical hookups.

8 Lawn mower and lawn equipment

Lawn mowers and yard equipment get very dirty after a full year of use. A pressure washer can remove all of the dirt and grass and get them ready for spring or winter storage.

9 What's in that tree?

Puzzled how to get that football out of the tree? A pressure washer just might be the answer.

DON'T'S

1 Don't pair bright white and warm white in the same space. Bright whites tend to have bluer tones while warm whites have yellower ones.

2 Don't place white elements in situations in which they may get overly soiled.

3 Don't blend too many different shades of white in the same

space.

4 Don't be afraid to pair white with deep bold colors such as black, brown and indigo for a sense of contrast.

5 Don't overlook opportunities to use white as an opportunity to bring negative space into a room, which can allow the eye to visually breathe.

NOW HERE'S A TIP

By JOANN DERSON
(C) 2021 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

■ Candles will burn more evenly if you refrigerate them for a few hours before lighting.

■ "My great-nephew and his family came to visit, and his toddler son is quite into opening doors. I had baby-proofed my home, but I did not think about his being able to turn a doorknob. His very smart mother pulled out a sock and slipped it over the doorknob, then secured it with a wide rubber band. Even I was unable to get a good grip on the doorknob after that!"—V.R. in North Carolina

■ Surprise guests? Here's how to quickly clean your living areas: First, clean the toilet, mirror and vanity in the guest bathroom and leave a fresh towel; grab a laundry basket and remove any clutter from the living room and kitchen; put away or clean dirty dishes and wipe down counters in the kitchen; finally, give carpets a

quick vacuum. Then maybe light a great-smelling candle and greet your guests!

■ "Fireplaces are wonderful for heat and ambience, but the ashes! When cleaning up, I spritz the ashes with a rosemary water solution. This keeps them from dusting up and flying all over, and it smells great. My neighbor puts her damp loose-leaf tea in the fireplace for scent."—C.W. in Iowa

■ "In cold winter months, keep your robe (and slippers or whatever else) under the covers with you when you sleep. Pull it next to or over you a few minutes before you get up. It'll be toasty and will help make the transition into the cold a little less harsh."—Giselle in New York

■ Empty spice containers can be used to hold different hardware in the shop or in your toolbox.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

Life & Style

Jussie Smollett testifies at his trial: 'There was no hoax'

CHICAGO (AP)—Former "Empire" actor Jussie Smollett denied Monday that he staged an anti-gay, racist attack on himself, testifying at his trial that "there was no hoax" and that he was the victim of a hate

crime in his downtown Chicago neighborhood.

Smollett, who faces charges that he lied to Chicago police about the January 2019 attack, sought to refute damaging testimony from two brothers

last week. They said Smollett, who is gay and Black, orchestrated the hoax to get publicity, giving them \$100 for supplies and instructing them to place a noose around his neck and yell homophobic slurs. They

also said Smollett gave them a \$3,500 check to carry it out.

Smollett appeared calm throughout several hours of testimony, saying he wrote the

\$3,500 check to Abimbola Osundairo for nutrition and training advice. Asked by his defense attorney if he gave Osundairo payment for some kind of hoax,

Smollett replied: "Never."

Attorney Neny Uche asked again if he planned a hoax.

"No," Smollett said, "there was no hoax."

Fired CNN anchor Chris Cuomo steps away from SiriusXM show

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Fired CNN anchor Chris Cuomo said he's dropping his SiriusXM radio show, a decision that followed a sexual harassment allegation.

"While I have a thick skin, I also have a family, for whom the past week has been extraordinarily difficult," Cuomo said in a Twitter post Monday. He said he's stepping back to "focus on what comes next."

After the announcement, SiriusXM said that Cuomo's "Let's Get After It" will no longer air and thanked him for his work. The show began in 2018.

Cuomo was criticized for breaching journalism ethics by trying to help his older brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, deal with his own harassment allegations. CNN had suspended the younger Cuomo after learning that his actions were more extensive than previously thought, then fired him Saturday.



Cuomo

Chris Cuomo has said he was simply trying to help his brother.

The harassment claim be-

came known shortly after CNN cut ties with him. The woman, who has chosen to remain anonymous, took her allegations to CNN on Wednesday through her lawyer, Debra Katz.

Katz did not give any specifics about the alleged behavior which, if it happened, may have occurred before Cuomo joined CNN in 2013. Prior to that, he worked at

ABC News, which didn't immediately respond Monday to questions about Cuomo's tenure there.

Drake withdraws 2 Grammy nominations from final ballot

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Drake wants no part in competing for a Grammy.

The four-time Grammy winner and his management

thorized to speak publicly on the matter.

On Monday, the Grammys has already removed Drake's nominations from the nominee list on its website.



Drake

They said Drake's request was honored by the academy.

The people spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because they were not au-

Drake was nominated for best rap album "Certified Lover Boy" and "Way 2 Sexy" featuring Future and Young Thug, which earned a nomination for best rap performance.

Drake has called out the Grammys in previous years. The rapper has shown his displeasure for not being nomi-

nated outside the rap category. He also took aim at the importance of the Grammy Awards during his acceptance speech after "God's Plan" won best rap song in 2019.

"If there's people who have regular jobs who are coming out in the rain, in the snow, spending their hard earned money to buy tickets to come to your shows, you don't need this right here. I promised you, you already won," said Drake while holding his trophy. Before the rapper continued, his speech was cut off.

The Grammys will take place in Los Angeles on Jan. 31.

Justin Bieber performs at Saudi F1 race after boycott calls

JIDDAH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—Pop star Justin Bieber performed to a packed crowd in the Red Sea city of Jiddah in Saudi Arabia, singing some of his most popular hits. The Sunday night concert took place even as human rights campaigners and activists called on Bieber to cancel his performance to protest the kingdom's arrests and crackdown of critics.

Bieber's model wife, Hailey Baldwin Bieber, posted a supportive video on Instagram of him on stage, with the words: "Go Baby." Other videos on

social media showed Bieber on stage solo, wearing a coordinated red outfit. Pop and R&B singer Jason Derulo performed before Bieber with backup female dancers in sweatpants and baggy tops.

Only a few years ago, this would have been an unthinkable scene in Saudi Arabia, where ultraconservative norms prevailed. Concerts were banned and unmarried men and women were segregated in public spaces. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is behind the sweeping changes as he works to

modernize society, attract foreign investment and create jobs for youth.

Human Rights Watch and others, however, have called on celebrities to boycott the kingdom, saying such events are aimed at diverting attention and deflecting scrutiny from Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

Bieber was the biggest name performer to take the stage as part of Saudi Arabia's Grand Prix, which saw Lewis Hamilton win ahead of the last race of the Formula One season.

Husband's little secret revealed after 30 years

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my husband for 41 years, married for 30, but we lived together for five years before we tied the knot. I have just learned he has a son who is two months younger than our son. The mother is a woman he slept with while I was pregnant with our first child. She put the baby up for adoption, and the young man has just reached out to my daughter. My husband claims he didn't find out about the child until after he was relinquished, and he didn't believe the woman ever really gave birth.

I am devastated. I feel like my entire marriage to him has been a lie. He says after we were married 31 years ago, he never cheated on me, and I should move past it. What do you think I should do?

UNABLE TO LET IT GO

DEAR UNABLE: You have my sympathy. I agree with your husband that you need to move past this, but that doesn't mean you should forget it. Solid marriages are based on trust, and yours has understandably been shattered.

If his behavior since your wedding has been as exemplary as he claims, you should be able to review his financial records and see where the marital assets have been going. He should also be willing to discuss this in the office of a licensed marriage and family therapist. If he is unwilling to do this, it is another red flag, and you should consider consulting a lawyer.

DEAR ABBY: I've been Christian all my life. When I married my husband 22 years ago, he was too. We raised our kids in the same faith. Well, he has recently decided he will no longer practice Christianity. I never would have married someone outside my faith. How do I continue in this marriage?

FAITHFUL IN OREGON

DEAR FAITHFUL: I am sure this has been upsetting for you, and you have my sympathy. I would hope that your husband's recent change of mind is something you have discussed with him, because he may have his reasons for it. Because of your own deep religious beliefs, this may be something to discuss with your religious adviser. Some couples in these circumstances adopt a "live and let live" attitude, which means you follow your Christian path and allow your husband to follow his.

DEAR ABBY: My sister-in-law emailed me Christmas lists for my niece and nephew. Abby, I didn't ask for them, nor did I request gift ideas for her children. In fact, I haven't seen my sister-in-law in more than six months. Of course I will be giving gifts to both my nephew and niece, but I think it was awfully presumptuous of her to just send a link via email. How can I respond to this in the future? Should I just let it go? Am I wrong in thinking that it was poor etiquette on her part?

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DUMBFOUNDED IN FLORIDA

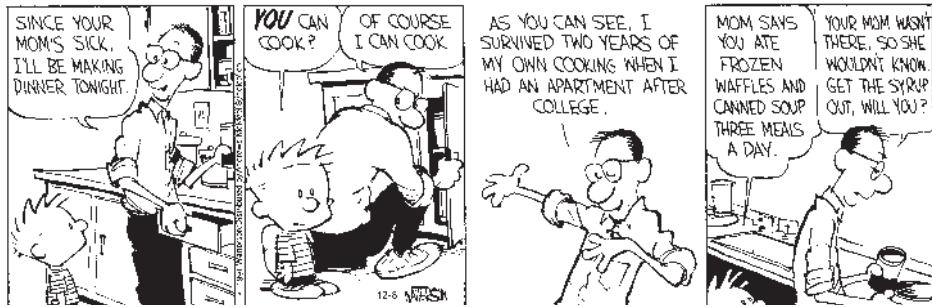
DEAR DUMBFOUNDED: Your sister-in-law may have been trying to be helpful, but I agree that what she did was presumptuous. Handle it by sending gifts of your own choosing to your niece and nephew. If you receive any more links of that nature in the future, do the same thing.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



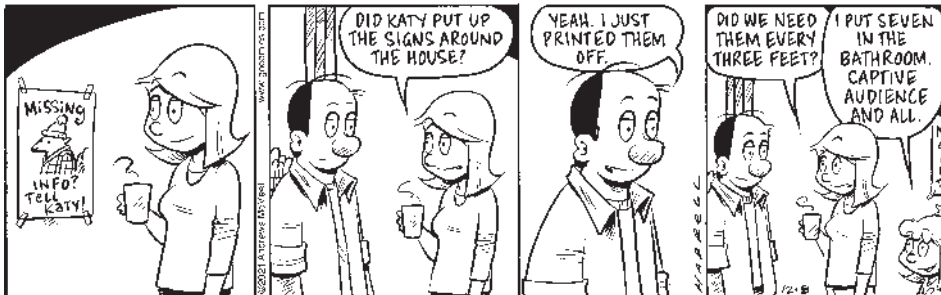
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

43 New York canal

44 Lamb's dam

46 Bluster

50 July 4th display

55 Cattle call

56 Saharan

57 Aswan's river

58 In the manner of

59 Satchels

60 — Club

61 StubHub buys, slangily

DOWN

1 Lettuce type

2 "The Kite Runner" boy

3 "Toodle-oo!"

4 Bounties

5 Ab — (from the start)

6 Sea, to Henri

7 Sacred chests

8 "Nuts!"

9 Tyler of "Ad Astra"

10 Prior night

11 Aachen article

17 "Mayday!"

19 TiVo precursor

22 Yankee nickname

23 Dance studio rail

25 Author Morrison

26 Mr. Stravinsky

27 Baseball team

28 Track shape

29 Nullify

30 Ticklish Muppet

31 Sport

35 Holy cheeses

38 Floors it

40 Hardly any

42 "How adorable!"

45 Billions of years

47 Latin 101 word

48 Arias for one

49 Deception

50 "Terrific!"

51 Glass of public radio

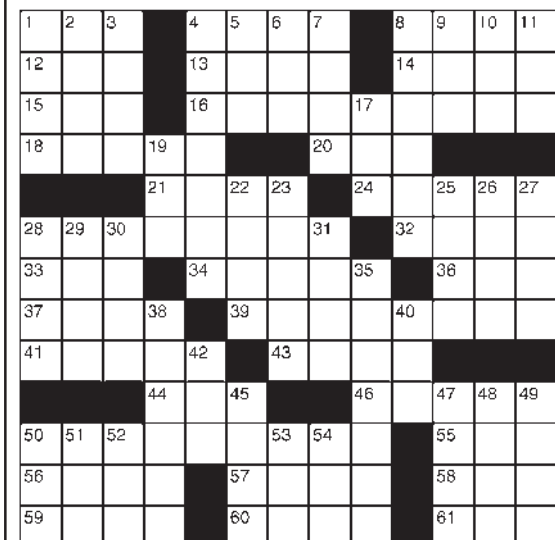
52 Fix illegally

53 Estuary

54 Carrier to Amsterdam

Solution time: 23 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-B



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Teala Dunn, 25; Ian Somerhalder, 43; Teri Hatcher, 57; James Galway, 82.

Happy Birthday: Set goals, and take the liberty to pour your time and skills into making your dream come true. Refuse to let anyone discourage you or meddle in your plans. A positive attitude, realistic approach and moderate budget will support the results you anticipate. Show passion and determination, and you will get the assistance you require and gain the respect you deserve. Your numbers are 9, 13, 21, 26, 33, 35, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Call on friends and allies, and you'll get the back-up you need to get things. Use your intelligence, knowledge and experience to outmaneuver anyone trying to stand in your way. Search for truth, and make wise decisions. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Stay on course, regardless of what others do or say. Avoid outlandish ideas, spending on something wasteful. Pick your battles wisely, and put your efforts where they will physically help you get ahead. Focus on personal improvements. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Live and learn. Use the experience, and knowledge you have to escalate your dreams, hopes and wishes, you will be happy with what you accomplish. Don't expect everyone to be happy for you; jealousy will cause someone to oppose you. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Pay attention to what everyone is doing, and you'll pick up ideas that will help you get

things done on time and with finesse. A change someone makes will help you and give you a reason to partner to reach your goals. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Sit tight and take a logical approach to change. Don't try to fix what's working. Give yourself time to think and plan. Patience and finding new ways to use what you already have will pay off. Self-improvement projects will be beneficial. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Say only what's necessary and truthful. Don't engage in gossip or criticism. A positive attitude and suggestions will help you stir up enthusiasm and encourage others to pitch in and support instead of getting in your way. Romance is encouraged. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Take pride in what you do to help others. Keep an open mind and offer innovative solutions to those struggling just as hard as you. Build strong alliances, you will find the road to success. Concentrate on equality, balance and integrity. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Evaluate your lot in life, and consider feasible adjustments that will get you closer to your dreams. Everything comes at a price, and putting in the effort will stir up passion and desire to go above and beyond your expectations. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Go directly to the source, speak up and don't let anyone mess with you. How you navigate your way through situations that involve controlling individuals will show your strengths and weaknesses. Don't give in or give up. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Keep emotional matters to yourself, and it will be easier to go about your business without interference. Sort out your thoughts, and figure out what you will do next before you blurt out your intentions. ★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Surround yourself with people who have something to contribute. Delegate responsibilities to whoever can do the best job. Walk away from situations that are volatile or might make you look bad. An argument will put you in a vulnerable position. ★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Sharing too much information will give someone the edge in a competitive situation. Don't present or promote what you plan to do until you have everything in place. Your success depends on secrecy, the element of surprise and your charisma. ★★

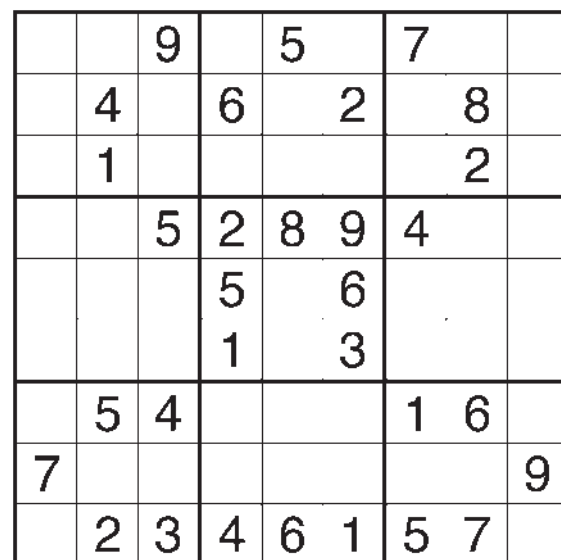
Birthday Baby: You are insightful, dominant and straightforward. You are outgoing and commanding.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



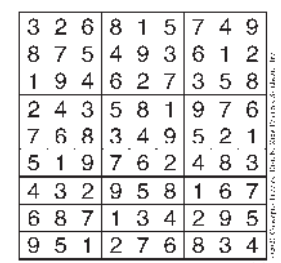
Difficulty Level ★★★

12/08

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BROWNIES MAKE ME SMILE.

Solution: 9 letters



© 2021 ArcNews Media Syndication www.wonderword.com 12/8

Almond, Aroma, Batter, Bite, Blond, Butterscotch, Cakes, Candy, Cheesecake, Chewy, Chickpea, Chips, Coconut, Crumb, Dense, Eggs, Flour, Frost, Fruit, Fudge, Layers, Marshmallow, Melt, Milk, Mint, Mixture, Moist, Oil, Organic, Oven, Rich, Rolls, Salt, Sauce, Soft, Spice, Sugar, Sweet, Taste, Texture, Toffee, Vanilla, Walnut, Whipped Cream, Whisk, Yolk

Yesterday's Answer: FastPass

Purchase the NEW Treasury 46 and 47 in time for the holidays! Order online at WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (Contains 75 puzzles.)

Patriots out-run Bills in 14-10 win in blustery conditions



ORCHARD PARK, N.Y.
(AP)—Damien Harris scored on a

64-yard run in blustery conditions in which Mac Jones attempted just three passes, and the New England Patriots shored up their familiar place atop the AFC with a 14-10 win over the Buffalo Bills on Monday night.

Defensive back Miles Bryant sealed the victory by batting down Josh Allen's pass at the goal line with Buffalo facing fourth-and-14 at New England's 18 with 1:55 remaining.

The Patriots leaned heavily on their ground game outgaining the Bills 229 to 99 in yards rushing, with the cold, windy snowy night negating Allen's strong-armed passing attack.

New England (9-4) won its seventh consecutive game, improved to 6-0 on the road this season and now has a two-win edge over the Bills (7-5) in the AFC East standings.

Harris finished with a season-best 111 yards rushing and opened the scoring on New England's ninth play from scrimmage. Facing third-and-5, Harris burst through a gaping hole up the middle and was untouched on his way to the end zone.

With the Patriots facing winds gusting up to 40 mph, coach Bill Belichick succeeded on a 2-point conversion, with Brandon Bolden scoring just inside the left pylon.

The Patriots never trailed with Nick Folk hitting two field goals—both with the wind at his back—from 34



New England Patriots running back Damien Harris (37) takes a handoff for a touchdown during the first half of an NFL football game against the Buffalo Bills in Orchard Park, N.Y., Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. AP

and 41 yards.

The Bills continued their inconsistencies by losing four of their past seven, and have not won consecutive games since capping a 4-0 run spanning Sept. 19 to Oct. 10.

Though the two teams meet once more in Foxborough, Massachusetts, on Dec. 26, Buffalo's path to repeat as division champions, never mind earn a third straight postseason berth, is suddenly muddled. The AFC's wild-card race

now features four teams with seven wins. The Bills also dropped to 5-5 against AFC opponents and 3-1 against division opponents.

The Bills defense continues to be susceptible against the run. The 222 yards rushing allowed on Monday came two weeks after Jonathan Taylor scored five times and gained 185 yards rushing in the Indianapolis Colts 41-15 win at Buffalo.

Jones was relegated to hand-

off duties in attempting one pass—a 12-yard completion in which tight end Jonnu Smith tipped the ball to himself—in the first half. According to Elias Sports, the Patriots had the fewest yards passing and became the first team to attempt just one one pass in the first half since at least 1978.

He finished 2 of 3 for 19 yards in becoming the NFL's third quarterback to win nine games in his rookie season, joining Pittsburgh's Ben Ro-

ethlisberger in 2004, and Dallas' Dak Prescott in 2016. He also joined Roethlisberger and Prescott in becoming the NFL's third rookie QB to win his first six road starts.

Each team capitalized on the other's mistakes in trading touchdowns in the opening quarter.

Harris' TD came three plays after New England's Lawrence Guy recovered Matt Breida's fumble at the Patriots 31.

Buffalo responded on its next possession which was extended after N'Keal Harry slipped had Matt Haack's punt glance off his helmet, with Siran Neal recovering the ball at New England's 14. Allen hit Gabriel Davis on a slant route on the next play to cut the lead to 8-7.

The Bills blew several scoring chances by managing a touchdown and field goal on four trips inside the Patriots 20. That included Tyler Bass missing a 34-yard attempt wide right into the wind midway through the fourth quarter.

The elements were at times overwhelming, including a wind-chill that dropped the temperature into the mid-20s.

One of New England's Jake Bailey's punts went sideways into the wind for 15 yards. Members of ESPN's pre-game broadcast crew were blown off their chairs along the sideline, and the orange flags was ripped off the top of the left upright in the east end of the stadium.

At least the snow stopped falling before game time, after the field was covered by a white dusting two hours before kickoff.

Hyde took over Buffalo's kickoff- and punt-returning duties with both Isaiah McKenzie and rookie Marquez Stevenson inactive. Stevenson recovered his own fumble on a punt return against the Saints in his first game taking over the job for McKenzie, who was benched after his muffed punt led to the Colts scoring a touchdown two weeks ago.

Analysis: Deciding when to gamble a coach's toughest choice

By **BARRY WILNER**
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

John Harbaugh has the best kicker in the NFL, currently and possibly ever. Yet, trailing by one point, he left Justin Tucker on the sideline Sunday night and went for a 2-point conversion in the dying seconds at Pittsburgh.

Lamar Jackson didn't quite have enough touch on his pass to an open Mark Andrews, and the Ravens (8-4) fell 20-19 to the Steelers. The defeat dropped Baltimore from the overall lead in the AFC.

It seemed one of the stranger decisions of a strange NFL season. But Harbaugh, one of the league's best coaches, quickly explained his reasoning.

"We tried to win the game right there. We were pretty much out of corners at that

point in time," Harbaugh said without noting that Baltimore's secondary has been leaky all season no matter who is playing. "It was an opportunity for us to win the game right there."

Considering the versatility of Jackson, it probably was a strong opportunity. But the one item not a major part of Jackson's bag of tricks is the finesse pass, which is what this play called for.

"You saw the play. It's that close," Harbaugh said. "It's a game of inches. You saw the speech in, 'Any Given Sunday,' right? That's football. It's just that close."

As is the entire AFC race.

Baltimore's decision surprised its archrivals. And didn't.

"I was a little surprised because I ran off the field," said DE Cam Heyward, who is

not on special teams. "But we called the timeout, bought me an extra couple of seconds. At first, I thought (Andrews) scored, because he had it in his hand and then he dropped it. But I mean, it's just one or two plays that go your way."

Harbaugh's gamble was in character, according to Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, who has gone up against the Ravens coach for nearly 14 seasons.

"You know what, coach Harbaugh, Miami (Ohio) guy, nothing surprises me," Big Ben said. "And that's why he's, you know, I consider him a great football coach because he takes those chances and believes in his team, and as a player, I'm sure they love that belief in them."

Fair enough, and who is to say the Ravens would have won a coin toss to start over-

time, marched downfield and scored a touchdown to end it without putting their secondary on the field?

But the decision brings into focus just how difficult crunch time can be for coaches. There is no accepted manual on how to manage such situations. Many times, the gut feeling is the best approach.

Unfortunately, very few head coaches have the, well, guts to go with their gut. Far too many of them coach not to lose rather to win. Is there anything more frustrating than watching your team go into the prevent defense? Cliche warning: All the prevent defense does is prevent you from winning.

See what happened in Detroit, which is pretty emblematic of what the Vikings have gone through in 2021. A team talented enough to be high

in the mix for the NFC wild-card spots, they fell to 5-7 in great part because they shut down the throttle. Minnesota added a two-point defeat to losses by eight, seven and four points; by three points in a pair of overtime games; and 34-33 at Arizona.

In pretty much handing the Lions (1-10-1) their initial victory of the season, the Vikings went into such a defensive shell, and offense-challenged Detroit went 75 yards in 1:50. Without a timeout.

Jared Goff threw an 11-yard touchdown pass to Amon-Ra St. Brown just beyond the goal line as time expired—with the Vikings' defensive backs far too deep in the end zone.

Minnesota's three-man rush backfired big time.

"In hindsight, we would have loved to have got-

ten more pressure on him," coach Mike Zimmer said of Goff, "but I didn't think we were covering very well. I thought we needed more people in coverage than we did up front. Obviously, that didn't work."

It very often doesn't.

The lesson? It hurts more to be passive and lose than to be super aggressive and lose.

"Honestly if we would've converted the 2-point conversion we would've been having a different conversation right now," said Ravens linebacker Josh Byner. "Let's be real. We'd be talking about how we found a way to win."

"At the end of the day they found a way to make one play and we didn't. That's what it came down to. That's what these games are about, especially this late in the season. They made one extra play."

LaVine nets 32, Bulls overcome DeRozan's absence, top Denver



CHICAGO (AP)—The Chicago Bulls found out they had to get by without DeMar DeRozan, then showed they have enough to keep winning, even when they're missing one of their best players.

It sure is a welcomed change for Zach LaVine after years of losing.

"No idea, brother," he said, laughing.

LaVine scored 32 points and the Bulls overcame DeRozan's absence to beat the Denver Nuggets 109-97 on Monday night.

The Bulls took a big hit a few hours before tipoff when DeRozan, their leading scorer, entered the NBA's health and safety protocols. Even without the four-time All-Star, they dominated down the stretch and tied Brooklyn for the Eastern Conference lead.

It's just another sign of how far the Bulls have come. After four straight losing seasons, they hope to make the playoffs for the first time since 2017.

LaVine had a season-high eight assists in a solid all-around game.

Lonzo Ball and Nikola Vucevic each had 20 points and 10 rebounds. Ball also blocked four shots. All five starters reached double figures in points, and Chicago outscored Denver 15-0 in transition.

"I feel really bad for DeMar," coach Billy Donovan said. "He's worked really hard. I think to the best of his ability, he's really tried to remain very, very careful during these times of COVID. Vuc is a heck of a player, has been an All-Star. Zach last year was an All-Star. Those two guys, I think from a leadership standpoint, did a great job tonight. A lot of these guys have done a terrific job keeping themselves ready."

The Nuggets lost for the eighth time in 10 games despite a triple-double by Nikola Jokic. The reigning MVP finished with 17 points, 12 rebounds and a season-high 15 assists.

Will Barton and Monte Morris each scored 19. Aaron Gordon added 18 points. But the Nuggets got outscored 63-48 in the second half.

"This league is too good to come out lackadaisical," Morris said. "It's a slap in the face to the coaching staff because we start off good and just—I don't know what's happening. They gave us a great game plan. And (when) we do that, that's not cool."

Suns 108, Spurs 104

In Phoenix, Chris Paul had 21 points and 10 assists, Jae Crowder added a season-high 19 points and the Phoenix Suns held off the San Antonio Spurs for a 108-104 win on Monday night.

The ageless Paul had multiple highlights in the final few

minutes, helping the Suns become the first team to 20 wins this season.

The 36-year-old Paul made his presence felt on defense with a stellar play, poking the ball away from a driving Dejounte Murray, who was about to score on a fast break with 1:30 left that would have cut the Phoenix lead to one point. Instead, the ball deflected off Murray and out of bounds.

The 11-time All-Star added a 16-foot jumper seconds later while being fouled. Paul converted the free throw for a three-point play and a 108-102 lead.

Phoenix was playing its first game since having its franchise-record 18-game winning streak snapped against Golden State on Friday. The Suns didn't appear fazed by the setback and won for the 19th time in 20 games dating to Oct. 27.

Bucks 112, Cavaliers 104

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo came back from a two-game absence and scored 27 points on his 27th birthday to help the Milwaukee Bucks defeat the Cleveland Cavaliers 112-104 on Monday night.

The two-time MVP made all three of his 3-point attempts and also had 12 rebounds in his return from a sore right calf as the Bucks won for the 10th time in 11 games. He scored 15 points in the fourth quarter.

"Guys are playing with confidence, playing together," said Antetokounmpo, who went 6 of 7 on free throws. "We're guarding together. We're in a very, very good spot right now."

Milwaukee split the two games it played without Antetokounmpo, losing 97-93 at Toronto and rolling to a 124-102 home victory over Miami.

The Bucks broke a 29-all tie with seven straight points early in the second quarter and stayed ahead the rest of the way, though Cleveland made the Bucks work for it.

After trailing by as many as 13, the Cavaliers got the margin down to two in the fourth quarter. Cedi Osman missed a 3-point attempt with 6:14 left that would have given Cleveland its first lead since late in the first quarter.

Thunder 114, Pistons 103

In Detroit, Shea Gilgeous-Alexander had 30 points and 13 assists, Luguentz Dort scored 28 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder rallied past the Detroit Pistons 114-103 Monday night in a battle of teams that entered with eight-game losing streaks.

"I thought our team showed a lot of heart and fight in the second half," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "We've lost all these games, so it would have been easy to give up when they came out making every-



Chicago Bulls guard Lonzo Ball, left, passes the ball away from Denver Nuggets forward JaMychal Green, back, and guard Davon Reed (9) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Chicago. AP

thing. They didn't do that."

Detroit led by 16 in the third quarter and 12 early in the fourth, but the Pistons were outscored 25-8 in the final five minutes of their ninth straight loss.

Gilgeous-Alexander's layup with 3:46 left gave Oklahoma City its first lead of the game, and after Cade Cunningham's miss, Mike Muscala made it 101-97 with a 3-pointer.

Another empty possession by the Pistons led to a three-point play for Dort, giving Oklahoma City a 104-97 advantage with 2:43 to play.

Grizzlies 105, Heat 90

In Miami, Dillon Brooks and Desmond Bane scored 21 points each, and the surging Memphis Grizzlies beat the Miami Heat 105-90 Monday night.

Memphis has won five straight without leading scorer Ja Morant, who hurt his left knee against Atlanta on Nov. 26. The Grizzlies have not trailed during their streak.

All five Grizzlies' starters finished in double figures. Steven Adams had 17 points and 16 rebounds, while Tyus Jones and Jaren Jackson scored 14 points each.

The Grizzlies opened the game on a 20-6 run and built an 11-point halftime lead. Then they maintained the double-digit advantage throughout the second half.

Miami's Jimmy Butler returned from a four-game absence because of a bruised tailbone and scored 10 points

before leaving for the locker room midway through the third quarter. He didn't return. Butler favored his back after a hard fall in a missed driving layup early in the first quarter.

Pacers 116, Wizards 110

In Indianapolis, two-time All-Star Domantas Sabonis was ready to do whatever it took to snap a four-game losing streak.

Especially against the team that eliminated the Indiana Pacers from the play-in round in May.

So on Monday night, Sabonis did it all. He produced his 19th double-double of the season with 30 points and 10 rebounds while adding six assists and three steals, helping the Pacers hold off hard-charging Washington 116-110.

Sabonis' play also seemed to inspire his teammates.

Caris LeVert had 19 points and Malcolm Brogdon added 17 points and eight assists for the Pacers, who had lost five straight in the series including the play-in game. And it didn't take long for Indiana to show everyone it intended to change directions.

While three-time All-Star guard Bradley Beal tried to bail out the Wizards with 34 points, Washington lost its third in a row and fell for the fourth time in five games. Beal appeared to hurt his left shoulder early in the fourth quarter during a tussle for a loose ball, but returned following a time-out and finished the game.

76ers 172 Hornets 125, OT

In Charlotte, N.C., Joel Embiid had a season-high 43 points, 15 rebounds and seven assists, and the Philadelphia 76ers held off the short-handed Charlotte Hornets 127-124 in overtime on Monday night.

Tobias Harris returned from a one-game absence due to illness and had 21 points and 11 rebounds as the 76ers shot 52.9% from the field and earned back-to-back wins for the first time since Nov. 4-6.

Embiid had six of Philadelphia's eight points in overtime and assisted on the other score.

Kelly Oubre Jr. had another standout game with 35 points with six 3-pointers for the Hornets, but missed a 3 at the end of the first overtime that would have tied the game and sent it to a second extra period.

Hawks 121, Timberwolves 110

In Minneapolis, Trae Young had 29 points and 11 assists, Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot scored 23 points and the short-handed Atlanta Hawks beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 121-110 Monday night.

Danilo Gallinari scored 20 points off the bench for Atlanta, which was without injured wings Cam Reddish, Bogdan Bogdanovich, Solomon Hill and DeAndre Hunter on the second night of a back-to-back.

Luwawu-Cabarrot had a career-high seven 3-pointers, shooting 7 of 14 as the Hawks set a franchise record

with 25 makes on a season-high 49 attempts from beyond the arc. Young was 4-of-9 shooting from 3 and Gallinari finished 4 of 6.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 31 points and 16 rebounds for Minnesota in his return after missing one game with a tailbone contusion. Anthony Edwards added 20 points for the Wolves, who were also short-handed without starting guards D'Angelo Russell and Patrick Beverly.

Warriors 126, Magic 95

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry had 31 points and eight assists, Andrew Wiggins made a career-high eight 3-pointers on the way to 28 points, and the Golden State Warriors beat the Orlando Magic 126-95 on Monday night.

Wiggins scored 17 of his points in the third quarter, knocking down three straight 3s over a span of 1:14. He finished 9 of 17 from the floor to help Golden State bounce back from having its 11-game home winning streak snapped in a 112-107 loss Saturday night to San Antonio.

Curry swished a half-court shot to beat the first-quarter buzzer and wound up with seven 3-pointers while shooting 8 of 16. Jordan Poole struggled to find his shot, going 4 of 15 for 12 points and contributing seven assists and seven rebounds.

Gary Harris scored 17 points to lead the Magic, who lost for the ninth time in 10 games.

Clippers 102, Trail Blazers 90

In Orlando, Ore., Paul George scored 21 points and the Los Angeles Clippers handed the shorthanded Portland Trail Blazers their third straight loss with a 102-90 victory Monday night.

Marcus Morris Jr. added 17 points and Luke Kennard, making his first start for the Clippers this season, finished with 15.

Jusuf Nurkic had a season-high 31 points for Portland, and Norman Powell finished with a season-best 29.

It was a tight game throughout. Brandon Boston Jr. hit a 3-pointer early in the fourth quarter to give the Clippers an 82-76 lead, but CJ Elleby answered with a 3 for the Blazers to keep it close.

Portland pulled to 88-86 on a pair of free throws from Powell with just under five minutes to go. After Reggie Jackson's driving layup, Nurkic sank a jumper.

George's dunk put the Clippers up 92-88 with 2:30 left. He added a pull-up jumper, and the Blazers couldn't get any closer. Jackson finished with 16 points.

The Clippers had lost four of their previous five games, including a 104-99 defeat at Sacramento on Saturday.

US plans diplomatic boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics



WASHINGTON (AP)—

The U.S. will stage a diplomatic boycott of the upcoming Winter Olympics in Beijing to protest Chinese human rights abuses, the White House confirmed Monday, a move that China has vowed to greet with “firm countermeasures.”

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said U.S. athletes will continue to compete and will “have our full support,” but added “we will not be contributing to the fanfare of the games.”

“U.S. diplomatic or official representation would treat these games as business as usual in the face of the PRC’s egregious human rights abuses and atrocities in Xinjiang, and we simply can’t do that,” Psaki told reporters during Monday’s briefing.

“We have a fundamental commitment to promoting human rights. And we feel strongly in our position and we



A visitor to the Shougang Park walks past the a sculpture for the Beijing Winter Olympics in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021. AP

will continue to take actions to advance human rights in China and beyond,” Psaki added.

The announcement came as Biden prepares to host a White House Summit for Democracy, a virtual gathering of leaders and civil society experts from more

than 100 countries that is set to take place Thursday and Friday. The administration has said Biden intends to use the meeting “to announce both individual and collective commitments, reforms, and initiatives to defend democracy and human rights at

in the discussions. We’re just here now receiving the news that we’re awarded [the grant] back in June. I don’t know what to say at this point. Most of us here also wondering how we’re going to fit two tennis courts in the property we have here as well as an Olympic-size pool between the baseball field and the softball field,” she said.

At this point, Race reiterated the utter futility of constructing only two tennis courts at the Oleai Sports Complex.

“The tennis association cannot use that as a tennis association facility for any kind

of a national training center. That was our shot and now it’s gone,” he said.

“Please share your concerns with Kodep and his team. I really don’t know what we can do at this point,” was Sablan’s reply.

Aside from the tennis courts and Olympic-size swimming pool, the makeover of the Oleai Sports Complex will also include the renovation and rehabilitation of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, Francisco “Tan Ko” M. Palacios Baseball Field, and the Oleai track and field.

be 2-3 Guam golfers heading here as well,” he said.

Aside from the full-to-capacity entries, Babauta also said the tournament has been blessed with a parade of sponsors, 60 to be exact.

“It’s gift-giving season so a lot of companies out there are very supportive of this event. On behalf of the Ronald McDonald’s House Charities and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Ayuyu and Team McDonald’s Saipan and Guam, we’d like to thank each and every sponsor for reaching out and supporting this very important cause,” he said.

Babauta said as tournament director his heart is full to the brim with the outpouring of support, especially if one realizes the main purpose of the Ronald McDonald’s House Charities.

“As we know we do have quite a few Micronesian families that are depending on the Ronald McDonald’s House Charities and it’s quite helpful for any family needing accommodations and just basically providing housing for low-in-

come families that are not able to afford accommodations. This is quite important for us as we’ve managed to raise thousands of dollars already and we have yet to hold the McDonald’s golf tournament.”

Established in 1987, the Ronald McDonald House Charities has helped over 38,000 families from the CNMI, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, and Hawaii. It’s not directly affiliated with McDonald’s Corp. or any of its restaurants and relies heavily on the support of the community to continue delivering services for those in need.

As for the \$64,000 question if whether Ronald McDonald will make an appearance at Kagman golf course? Babauta gamely said that’s for him to know and for the for the golfers to find out come this Saturday. “That’s a surprise!”

The inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament will have a showtime of 6am and a shotgun start of 7am.

home and abroad.”

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez, D-N.J., called such a diplomatic boycott “a necessary step to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to human rights in the face of the Chinese government’s unconscionable abuses.”

He called on “other allies and partners that share our values to join with the United States in this diplomatic boycott.”

Sen. Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican, however, said the diplomatic boycott amounted to a “half measure.”

American officials, including Biden, have criticized Beijing for human rights abuses against Uyghurs in northwest Xinjiang province, suppression of democratic protests in Hong Kong, military aggression against the self-ruled island of Taiwan and more. President Donald Trump’s administration in its final days declared the abuses in northwest China “genocide.”

“The United States should fully boycott the Genocide Games in Beijing,” Cotton said. “American businesses should not financially support

the Chinese Communist Party and we must not expose Team USA to the dangers of a repugnant authoritarian regime that disappears its own athletes.”

Cotton appeared to be referring to former Grand Slam doubles champion Peng Shuai, who dropped from sight after publicly accusing a former top Communist Party official of sexual assault. Concerns over her safety prompted the Women’s Tennis Association to suspend events in China and provided added fuel to opponents of China’s hosting of the games.

Fajardo wins SGA November Ace

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Mariano Fajardo won the Saipan Golf Association’s November Ace of the Month held last Nov. 21 at the Kingfisher Golf Links.

The 65-year-old veteran topped a 13-player field after shooting a net score of 70. He actually finished second to Joe I. Sablan, but took the monthly plum as Sablan already won in February. As per SGA rules, a golfer could only win the monthly tilt once a year with his runner-up taking the monthly ace if it happens a second time.

Sablan topped the November tourney after firing a net 69 built around a gross score of 96 (50-46) and a handicap of 27. Attorney General Edward Manibusan completed the Top 3 with a net score of 71.

Fajardo now joins SGA’s 2021 Ace of the Month: Das Krishnan (January), Joe I. Sablan (February), Frances



Fajardo



Sablan

M. Sablan (March), Rick Kautz (April), Tony Benavente (May), Ed Manibusan (June), Nick Sablan (July), Jung Eun Teack (August), Larry Deleon Guerrero (September), and Alex Tudela (October).

In the closest to the pin, competition, Alex Tudela beat all comers in hole No. 6. Fajardo was without peer in hole No. 6, while Fran-

ces Sablan and Rick Kautz lorded it all over the competition in holes No. 12 and 15. Frances Sablan brought the lumber in hole No. 2. Ditto for Das Krishnan in hole No. 10.

The SGA Ace of the Month Tournament will be held in Dec. 12 at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo. Tee time is at 9:30am with a showtime of 9am.

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top. I had dozens and dozens of people write letters in support of that. Far more than any other federation that I know of and we basically eliminated that as a national training center,” said Race.

Northern Marianas Sports Association executive director Carline Sablan said the CNMI Sports and Cultural Tourism Enhancement project is under the purview of Office of Planning and Development.

“None of us were involved

\$200K

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have to settle for \$300, while third placers still go home with \$200.

Babauta said there’s absolutely no room at the inn as all slots for the Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament have all been taken.

“The most important thing is just the overwhelming support of the local golfers. We have 141 confirmed golfers. Honestly, it’s been fully booked since Nov. 26 so we had to close it by Monday, Nov. 29, and to think the last day to register for the early bird was Nov. 30! So you know it’s full and it’s all quite exciting,” he said.

Part of the 141 registered golfers is a contingent from the CNMI’s southern neighbor, Guam.

“Guam golfers include 10 from the MARPAC team of Guam. They will be flying their own plane over. There’s also a couple of corporate guys from McDonald’s and some Matson representatives. There will also

NMI

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Hassan to reach this season’s finale, while Oliver Fajardo and Brian Lubao delivered for the NMI U18 to bring the youth squad to the championship game this weekend. Raymond Mercado scored the lone goal for Eleven Tiger.

The title duel in the MSL Cup will feature the Top 2 teams in the regular season. TanHoldings ended the preliminaries with a 5-0-0 win-draw-loss record and extended its winning streak after eliminating Paire, which advanced to the semis after shutting down the Old B Bank, 6-0. The NMI U18 was ranked No. 2 going into the playoffs with its 4-0-1 mark and needed the go-ahead from Lubao to oust Eleven Tiger, which notched a semis berth after nipping Kanoa last Wednesday, 1-0.

HAFA ADAI CUP The One FC 3, Kanoa 1

The One FC advanced to the semis first following a victory over Kanoa at the start of the playoff round in the division last Friday.

Sang Hun Lee, Zhipeng Lin, and Seung Woo Lee scored one goal apiece for The One FC, while John Thongaram made the only goal for Kanoa.

Next up for The One FC is Shirley’s Football Club and they will collide this Friday with the first finals berth at stake. Shirley’s FC was awarded the walk-off win over Bangladesh Youth last Sunday.

Saipan United 7, Matansa 1

Saipan United also played in the first round of the playoffs last Friday and eased past Matansa.

Ichiro Borja led the lopsided victory after firing a hat-trick. MD Soheal Akanda chipped in

two goals, while Kuu Nishimura and Enzo Yang added one each. Miles Linden recorded the lone goal for Matansa.

After knocking out Matansa, Saipan United will take on Chang Bai Hu this Friday for the second and last finals slot.

Chang Bai Hu 8, WNT U18 2

Chang Bai Hu moved into the Final Four after dominating the NMI Women’s U18 National Team last Sunday.

Ming Guang Xu starred in the win after registering five goals, four of them came in succession in the first half. Ri Chang Xian contributed a pair, while Zheng Xu had one. Pia Ngewakl and Jannah Casarino tallied the two goals for the NMI WNT U18.

Meanwhile, winners of Friday’s semis matches will battle for the division championship this Sunday at 4pm.



Patriots out-run Bills in 14-10 win in blustery conditions

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US plans diplomatic boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

\$200K at stake in Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament

By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



McDonald's Saipan and Guam will be hosting the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament this Saturday, Dec. 11, at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

The local franchisee of the fast-food giant won't be giving away just McDonald's Happy Meals to the winners of the medal play competition, as according to tournament director Vicente "Ben" Babauta, potential prizes for the first-ever Ronald McDonald

House of Charities Golf Tournament can go up to as much as \$200,000.

"There's close to about \$200,000 in possible prizes up for grabs and that includes a 2021 Lexus NX from Atkins Kroll, a 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander SE from Triple J Motors, and \$10,000 cash each from Bank of Saipan and United Equipment Rental," he said, alluding to the hole-in-one prizes.

Aside from the outrageous prizes for an ace, \$500 also await the winners of the A flight, B flight, C flight, ladies flight, seniors flight, and super seniors flight. Runners-up will

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From left, Inaugural Ronald McDonald House Charities Golf Tournament director Vicente "Ben" Babauta, McDonald's Human Resource manager Ana Olaes, tournament committee member Das Krishnan, McDonald's executive assistant to the president Natalie Mable A. Glenn, and tournament committee member James Nelson. Above on video call are, from left, McDonald's of Guam & Saipan Marketing director Divina Evaristo, McDonald's president and CEO Joe C. Ayuyu, McDonald's Saipan owner/operator Marcia E. Ayuyu, and McDonald's vice president Joe Ayuyu Jr. Photo was taken during the announcement of the tournament last June.

MARK RABAGO

2 planned tennis courts at Oleai 'useless'



By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Federation president Jeff Race lamented the downsizing of tennis courts from four to two for the planned \$21.2-million makeover of the Oleai Sports Complex.

Speaking during a recent Northern Marianas Sports Association membership meeting, the CNMI Hall of Fame inductee said the CNMI Sports and Cultural Tour-

ism Enhancement project has fallen short with regards to the tennis community's dream of building a national tennis center in the area.

During a presentation last



June, Office of Planning and Development director Kodep Ogumoro-Uludong said the Economic Development Administration-funded project will include the construction of two International Tennis Federation tennis courts with associated facilities such as warm-up walls, fencing, and bleachers.

And those plans didn't sit well with Race.

"That's useless. You might

as well have zero. You're going from four to two is not reducing the utility by 50% it's reducing it by 90%. We can't use it. It's not usable for us."

The many time CNMI national tennis coach and former Pacific Oceania captain said the plan as presently constituted wasted the efforts NMITA exerted in helping the \$21.2-million grant from EDA approved in the first place.

"We put in for four courts there and it was our federation, the tennis federation, that brought that project to the very

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NMI U18 vs TanHoldings in MSL Cup Finals

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER



TanHoldings Football Club and the NMI Boys U18 National Team will dispute the MSL Cup in the Marianas Soccer League Fall Season 2021 following their respective victories in the semifinals last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Kobleville.

The NMI U18 booked the first finals ticket after nosing out Eleven Tiger, 2-1, while TanHoldings also reached the title match following a 2-0 win over Paire Football Club. The NMI U18 and TanHoldings will square off for the MSL Cup this Sunday at 6pm.

The unbeaten TanHoldings drew its pair of goals from Michiteru Mita and Rakib

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The NMI Boys U18 National Team's Brian Lubao, third left, is surrounded by Eleven Tiger defenders during their semis game in the MSL Cup in the Marianas Soccer League Fall Season 2021 last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Kobleville.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association president Jeff Race is disappointed that tennis courts under the \$21.2-million makeover of the Oleai Sports Complex have been reduced to two.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO